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Cameras in cars: more fun than beepers



Tom Hardwick looks at a novel use for a video camera

Ever wondered if there's something in the road that doesn't show up in your mirrors as you reverse? Want to back up to within a couple of inches of the car behind so that you have more room to manoeuvre while getting out of a tight parking slot?



I've just fitted a very smart reversing camera to my car and very good it is too. The tiny camera/chip assembly is waterproof, cost less than a tenner and feeds a smart 4.3" LCD screen (fifteen quid from eBay) that sits happily just ahead of the gearlever. The camera is simple to wire into the reversing light power cable and when reverse is selected the camera automatically switches on and its signal turns on the LCD screen. Neat!



The camera is amazing. It has a very wide-angle field of view (12 mm lens equivalent) yet has zero barrel distortion, so there's none of the fish-eye effect you get with car cameras in general. It's also very sensitive and sees well in the dark - though the picture gets grainier the lower the ambient light levels. Your car's reversing lights help here of course. The chip is a 1/2.5" CMOS - almost exactly

the same size as a Super-8 frame. Whatever the light, exposures are excellent and colours vibrant.

I didn't want to drill steel so I made a hole in the



plastic bumper and opened it up with a file. No need for accuracy as the camera's front flange covers any slight mistakes. If you really make a hash of things then a rubber grommet will let you cover the hole.

The camera comes with two wires, one is a power feed and the other is the signal feed. I took off one of the real lamp clusters and wired the camera to the reversing light power lead. I then ran the signal cable into the car via the boot, past the rear seat and up to the centre console. A power lead is taken from the fuse box and it's a simple matter to hide the wire as it goes to feed the little



4.3" monitor.

And that's about it. You'll still use your door mirrors, but the camera will let you get to with a few inches of the car parked behind you, far, far closer than bravery allows. It would have been good if the camera's image went out of focus when objects were 12" away, say, but the image is sharp from 2" to infinity amazingly, so they've missed a trick there.

Tom Hardwick FACI



Pip Critten writes...

Editorial

Right now it's very difficult to take my own advice. Keep Smiling! Grrr

Lately it seems that technology is ganging up on me to make my life as difficult as possible.

In the last few days I have invented several new combinations of swear words to curse the computer I am working on to produce this magazine.

Admittedly it is an OAP, in computer terms, but that does not give it the right to make my life a misery, just because it is feeling old and dilapidated.

It has just this second done something else, probably reading as I write and thinking, "talk about me would you, I'll show you problems."

It just froze the program for a couple of minutes, "not responding" apparently. Probably just gone off for a nap.

Does it not realise that I am trying to meet a publishing deadline. This has to be finished in the next hour to meet the "end of the month" deadline.

Earlier it could not find Lee Prescott's mug shot picture. "Can't be found". That's rubbish, *everyone* knows Lee Prescott!

I found Lee's picture and pointed out that it does exist to this wrinkly old computer. It took umbrage and promptly lost the link to every other picture in this magazine leaving just empty frames.

My wife just came in to ask, "how's it going?"

I said, "I'm not going to get the PC Doctor to it, but I am seriously thinking of an undertaker."

Let me rant on a bit longer, I think it's doing me some good.

This computer and the ones I use at work might be conspiring against me. I am sure they can do that sort of thing if they set their little net worked minds to it.

I had sent some files of Interns pictures to the printer. They did not look good with the dreaded blank bands in them.

OK, no worries, I'll just do a Clean Print Heads. No better. OK run it again.

The printer clearly did not want to be bothered with all this cleaning and sent me a message saying, "I don't like your attitude, for that you can change the black

ink cartridge you fat old sod." It may not have been those exact words, but I knew what it meant.

"OK", I said through gritted teeth, "I am in a bit of a rush but I'll comply."

"Oh and for good measure," said the the printer, "you can change the cyan and yellow ink cartridges too."

So I did and it still didn't print any better.

Alright, I'll email the file to the hospital system and print it there.

"Can't do that," said the all knowing computer god, "the file is too large to send. Go back to Old Kent Road, do not pass Go, do not collect £200."

"You don't get the better of me," I thought, "I'll transfer the file using a secure memory stick." And I did. Ta Da.

Now the hospital printer joined in the crusade against my sanity. "Sorry mate," it said, "If you want me to print on card I'm going to keep jamming up."

I eventually settled for Black and White on plain white paper.

Right, I'm glad I got that off my chest.

Now what was I going to tell you this month?

Keep Smiling,
Pip,
pip@pipcritten.com



Hi Pip,

Another cracking issue. Colourful, good to look at with plenty to read. Lovely story of Jim Gill and his blushing bride on the front. Give them our best wishes. Annabelle and I went to the flicks too, on our first date. That was Sept. 19th, 1952. We saw Scaramouche.

She hasn't kicked me out yet, so my luck's holding!
Reg Lancaster

Hi Pip,

I recently bought a Rode Lavalier tie-clip microphone, and a 1.2 metre extension cable.

I never realised until now, that there was another use for the microphone cable until I saw the warning label that came with it.

It's a very good microphone. Well worth the money spent.

Huey Walker - Exeter Films



PS I think this label is one better than 'This shirt may contain pins' warning.

What do other readers think?



I am the current president of the Sydney Video Makers club of which Noel is a life member. We run a monthly club meeting and for our October meeting thought it would be great if we could screen a selection of videos from similar overseas clubs. A DVD is probably the most convenient media. So if your club has a selection of videos they would be happy to share with us I'm sure our members would be very grateful. We are always keen to see what other clubs are doing, especially overseas.

The Sydney Video makers club web site www.sydneyvideomakers.org.au has recently been updated. There is information about our club, past newsletters and links to its videos.

If you would like a DVD with a selection of our club videos to screen let me know and I will arrange it.

Stay focused
Andy [Doldissen andyd17@optusnet.com.au](mailto:Doldissen_andyd17@optusnet.com.au)
President Sydney Video Makers Club

The Chairman's Chat



Anne Vincent

How quickly we are coming up to the end of the summer, well here in Weymouth it is anyway, for the annual carnival was held this week, and locals always seem to consider this event the end of the season.

What is good about it is the video Club's are about to

begin their new programme of events, competitions are getting under way as well as other events which many of the clubs run.

While working here at my computer there was a loud knock on the front door. 'If that's that double glazing man, tell him to go away, I'm too busy – just writing the Chairman's Chat!

However, a familiar voice came down the hall – it was none other than Phil Marshman. No need for me to ask him how he is getting on in his retirement, because that voice is becoming quite well known.

Maybe you have heard it too, coming over your radio – and just what would Phil be talking about on the radio? Films of course!

Just in case you haven't heard him I am going to get him to tell you all about his new venture.

Here he is: ' Well, I was asked to be a member of the Film Critic Panel for 'Saturday Morning At The Pictures' which is part of the Marc O'Donnell Show on BBC Wiltshire Radio.

How did they get hold of you then Phil?

'This was because there was an article in the Wiltshire times about my Retirement from The Railway and my interest in films.'

I'm on about once every eight weeks. I have to see, at my own expense a new Film and an Old Film, and get myself to Swindon for the live broadcast – for which I also don't get paid. No income tax worries there! I'm interviewed about the films on the show.

I do it because it's a challenge for me. No one has said that they can't understand me. I'm on about 10.0am. I have got some critics however, Frome Chairman's wife always rings me up to give me some constructive criticism!

I think you are doing a great job Phil, and I know you are really enthusiastic. Keep up the good work!

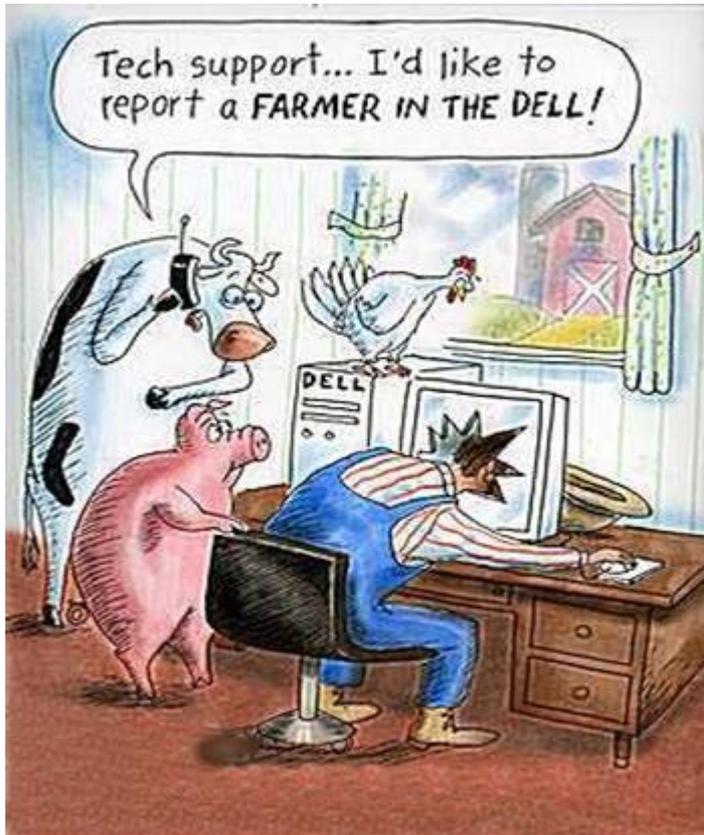
If you live within range of Radio Wiltshire, tune in on a Saturday morning about 10.0am and see if Phil is there. If you live out of the area, there is a way of tuning in, just ask Phil for details, or scan your SoCo News, you may find the reference there.

I would like to thank Phil very much for talking to us through my Chairman's Chat.

Hope you all have a good start to the new season, and I hope to meet some of you at one or other of the events.

Signing off for now

All The Best



Readers Letters

Hi Pip.

Great issue! Congrats! So much superb info to read AND view – but, perhaps, your next issue should have a brief note to potential viewers that the “https” should just read “http” in the url cited for the swimming giraffes video they might want to view although, being the clued-up videomakers they are, I am sure that they will work that out for themselves!

The tenor of incoming letters to SoCo News that fading (and ageing) membership is a fast increasing video club problem sure is a huge worry – here in Oz too of course, with our Sydney Video Makers now below 120 members for the first time in more than 25 years of previously steady growth – but, with so many other technically attractive and competing interests now out there, a beautifully structured, bright, informative, stimulating and all-inclusive regular newsletter like SoCo News (plus, maybe, some badly-needed encouragement from a “more with it” IAC, as suggested by Lee Prescott in his spot-on letter) is essential to further enthuse those already-hooked videomakers looking for even more and to also attract those keen young newbies so vital to the future of our marvellous hobby.

Sad, isn't it, that the natural attraction of recording forever visual history as we see it – and thoroughly enjoying doing it too – is not an absolutely must-do thing for the young today? And, although you may sometimes find the publishing deadline bearing down on you and you might rightfully wonder if your marvellous effort is truly appreciated, it most certainly IS! – so, please keep SoCo News flying high and ensure that it's vital mission of advancing our much-cherished hobby continues forever!

Nil desperandum – bon voyage instead! And – YOU keep smiling too!

Sincerely,

Noel Leeder.

How refreshing to read Rob Catt's practical and positive ideas on club publicity. We all forget to sell ourselves to potential new members unless we get a wake-up call like this.

I suggest one additional factor: a website.

It need cost nothing at all. It requires no special expertise. It takes a few hours to set up in basic form. And there you have a live advertisement for the club, with no restrictions on how much you can say. With full colour pages, pictures and videos if you wish. It is online 24/7 all through the year and can be found from anywhere on the planet not just by those who visit your local library. I recommend someone on the committee sits down at a computer, goes to www.weebly.com signs up, watches the introductory movie and starts making a website. Within an hour you can put up the draft first page and gradually develop it from there. It really is that easy.

Even us oldies tend to turn to Google for information, so having a website makes sense. For younger potential members it is essential publicity. In basic form it need not be much more than the flyers and posters Rob mentioned. If you do get a local radio interview ask permission to put a recording of it on the website so that it can be heard at anytime. You can, of course, develop a website as much as you like ... if you get the bug.

See you online ...

Dave Watterson (Assistant Webmaster www.theiac.org.uk)

Swindon Secret Filming

One problem that I have is filming discretely in certain locations, and particularly in central London where the security authorities look upon us all as potential terrorists. Other locations present various restrictions, I was once asked for £150 whilst filming in a zoo and told my equipment looked professional (Sony Z1) and I was using a tripod so there would be a charge. I was also challenged in Piccadilly by the police who wanted identity and details of what I was filming “EROS” I said!

I know we can use other hardware these days to film such as compact cameras and a wide range of DSLR's which will give high quality footage, I decided to look around for the type of camera which would give me the type of performance I required – I had bought a Sony Nex VG10 and a couple of lenses very cheaply from a guy who lost interest in video as a result of this I obtained a used Sony Nex 5 camera body and did some tests on it's video performance I was absolutely astounded with the quality that I achieved.



Now when I want to film high quality HD I pop the Nex5 around my neck get my walking stick monopod that I bought from Morris Photographic put a couple of lenses in my pocket and film what I want and where I want – freedom at last.

John Flanagan

SoCo News Archive



Many thanks to

Bournemouth Video Club

Who will be hosting the News Archive:

<http://bhvideoclub.com/latest-news/soco-news-letters/>



After two years as a member of the Reading Film and Video Makers (RFVM) I find myself wearing not one but two committee hats. Promotional Co-ordinator and also Programme Co-ordinator.

Blimey! What responsibilities for a club that is over 50 years old. Our new lady Chairperson Karen Cripps of course will steer the ship, with the help of her 10 strong committee.

Our membership varies around 40 as people come and go, so it's important to attract new members each year in order to meet our financial commitments of hall hiring etc, and to get fresh interaction from new people.

I have spent much time this past few weeks putting together next year's programme, and also finding ways to advertise with no budget.

The programme is sorted, and once again we kick off our new season with our 6 weeks "Introduction to Filmmaking" course. Ex-Chairman Laurie Joyce has given his time to run this excellent course for 2 years already, and it certainly does attract new members..... if we get the publicity.

The course this year will be more "hands on" with the promise of a DVD, written, starring and produced by each new member to show on the big screen at the club on the 6th week, with the help of more experienced members. Hopefully they will stay on as full members.

We rely heavily on our local press for advertising, but never with any guarantees that articles will be printed. So I found myself "tweeting" the other day. I have not done much "tweeting", but in amongst a search I had done, I found a link to a newspaper group announcing, "Advertise your event for free". I clicked on the link, signed up and within minutes was able to advertise our Filmmaking Course in no less than 4 local newspapers, and linking directly to our website.

Now, I can guarantee that not many 70 year olds will be tweeting or looking at online newspapers, but that is my point. I would LOVE to attract more younger members to our film club and this is exactly where they may be looking. We already have about a dozen younger members, but in order to keep them, we need to have more young people. I wonder if other clubs have managed to attract and retain younger members?

Our club [website](#), full to bursting with information, won the award for the IAC Best Club Website 2012, however I was not personally convinced that it was giving the right first to younger browsers. Working together with our webmaster Tony Colvile, we are proud to announce the new look of our award winning website. Fresher colours, new modern images of Reading, and simplified layout. Our Gallery now includes films ranging from Documentary, Animation, Fiction and Fun Club Challenges, all clearly described, as well as a Live Events section. New browsers, at a glance, can now easily access up to date information about the club, whilst members can dip into club history with a simple click on new "Archives" tab.

We hope it has all been worthwhile..... now we wait!

Anne Massey

SALTASH VIDEO GROUP



Left to right, back row; Terry Aire, Alan Chubb, Gerald Dinnis, Dave Finemore. Front row; Audrey Miller, Alan Barratt, Sheila Barratt, Anne-Marie Turner

Current members and family of the Saltash Video Group met on 17th July 2013 at Natter Bridge Inn to celebrate 50 years of film making.

The club which started in 1963, originally called the Delta Cine Club has been documenting the changes and celebrations of Saltash, which include the building of the Tamar Bridge and Tunnel right through to recently with the Olympic Torch and the unveiling of the new Ferryman sculpture at Saltash Waterside.

The group toasted the club and paused to remember Pat May and other previous members.

Members enjoyed an evening of reminiscing and good food, which of course was also filmed, so now we will be part of our annual May Day film show newsreel!

Here's to the next 50 years!

Anne-Marie Turner

Gloucester Film Makers



Competition Results

Video to recorded Music for the Weston Trophy was won by Chris Martin with 'Daydream? And the Runners-up Comp for the Muriel Gray Trophy was won by Ken White with 'Food for the Monastery'

Open Comp No 1 for the Walwin Trophy the winner was Chris Wheatley with 'Bryce Canyon'

Documentary Comp for the Cresswell Trophy was won by Ken White with 'The Stuff of Life'

The Animation Competition for the Richardson Trophy and the Impact Competition for the Carwithen Trophy will be held later in the year due to a programme change.

In June some of our members spent a most interesting and informative evening with members of Cheltenham Video Makers thanks to an invitation from Ken White.

We were treated to some excellent wild life film excerpts, which were presented by Karen Partridge from Bristol Film Makers.

MAKING MOVIES - "THE TRAMP" SHOOT

By COLIN COBBER

A Member of the Spuzzum Video Club.

The following is a true story - so help me.

Some weeks ago, our Club enrolled a new member, a senior lady. She announced that she was "a writer". Expectant eyebrows greeted her. "You might be able to write a narrative for our Club to Shoot, could you?" "Oh, yes. I have a note-book of stories already written." She so happened to have brought one of her gems along to the Meeting. "I have a copy of it with me. Let me tell you how the story goes."

She rose from her chair in full flight. Lights, action!

From her purse she waved a sheet or two of paper with handwriting thereon. "Weee--eell, this tramp is found standing near a park bench." (Dramatic pause - got that?) She began to fill in the details of how three ladies visiting the park had seated themselves on the bench. One lady sniffed the air, turned her head, and there was a dirty, smelly tramp standing behind the bench.

It's an old story with a beard two feet long.

"Now, I'll continue," I gently added. Doreen had emailed me a copy of the "story", written in one paragraph of prose. I began "ad libing" from my head. "Folks, the delicate effluvia emanating from the tramp's body had wafted across the seated ladies. Their feminine sensibilities had been assaulted. Then the tramp weaseled his body on to the small vacant end of the bench and sat down. The three ladies were now embarrassingly squished, bodies touching. The lady beside the odorous interloper stood up and left. " (My facial grimaces and other body movements bore a resemblance to video shots.) Doreen finished the ending of the story. Smiles. Teamwork. Yeh!

But, I doubt if Doreen understood why I was painting "colourful word pictures." Hint, Doreen: Word pictures were to be transformed into video shots.

The gist of this yarn :the tramp would persuade the ladies, one by one, to leave the bench and he would claim it all for himself, finishing his invasion in the prone position, lights out, hat over his head...

Doreen, all smiles, announced that she would be "the Shoot Director." Then, undaunted, she stated that she could be

a cameraperson as well. The proposed Shoot would be a piece of cake. After all, the main work was already done! She smiled coyly and waited for the first accolades. Heads around her were nodding. Encouragement and accommodation. "Yes, a Club movie. We now have a writer to make our narrative movies. Great! Thanks, Doreen."

"Mmmm," I mused. Barry, a club founding member, unashamedly snorted and guffawed! But I mused on again. "Its premise may very well work out. A melodramatic farce. Yes, the tramp will end up in a recumbent position along the whole bench. Ha, ha, ha ! A few minutes long. A sure-fire good old farce."

Flashback. Two weeks ago, after Doreen found that she'd established some interest among members, she said she'd email the "Script", inviting members to come to a Shoot. Within a few days, the "Script" flashed on my computer screen, an occasional line of incomplete dialogue, but almost all of it written in "reported" prose form. I phoned her. "Would you draw up a 'Shot List', Doreen? And email me a copy?"

"A what ?" The shot lobbed over her bow - and over her head..

Well, no matter, it's better if you can complete a Shoot with members' participation. And you have to show some "faith" in your colleagues.

During the period of time between Doreen's inspiration and presentation to the Club, I phoned a couple of members who live in the city. "I need a suitable location in your town, say, in a park." An hour later I had the location of our Shoot site. I took that on faith, too. Oh, yes, I did. As it turned out, we needed a lot MORE than simple "faith"! Yea, I speaketh - Verily we needed a goodly dose of divine intervention.

I confirmed the arrangements with the Club President. "We'll meet there, hey, for our first rehearsal ? 10:00 AM. OK, you can count on me."

The Club Newsletter member dispatched a special newsletter. "The first Shoot will be a rehearsal at Cedar Park." After an hour's traveling to the location, my wife beside me, our eyes lit up at the sight of the "tramp" faithfully attired in grubby, ripped clothes, and presenting an unshaved face, with patches of dirt on it. Dishevelled hair. An inspired work of art ! Perfect. The Club President had recruited him and he was all pumped up, in his mind, for a "one-off" Oscar performance.

Apparently, no one reads Bulletin announcements.

Overhead, a minute later, a floatplane taking off roared across the harbour a few blocks away. Full throttle for a several minutes. The first of a dozen more floatplanes over the next two hours. Then buses rumbled frequently past our site and powered away at the nearby intersection. Audio capture - impossible. OK. All the more reason for a silent movie, old-time piano music, gimmicky, over-acted "facials", tight editing, maybe in B/W with "movie-film projection effects" added.

A bonus. Amateur actors' mistakes and ridiculous acting skills would be considered part of the farce!

Not so fast!

On surveying my environs, I noted the three nicely dressed ladies seated on the bench. . Rehearse? Oh, no. They were all steamed up ready for a Shoot. . Whoa! About 25 feet back from the bench a wondrous sight. There was Burt, another new member, seated on a folding chair, his camera on a tripod, and an umbrella over his lordship. He was nicely ensconced in the shade - ready to "roll 'em." A few feet from Burt, to his left side, was Kate, her camera at the ready. All that was needed was "action" from the director. You don't believe me, do you? How could I be so naive - yea, stupid? Faith was "doing me in".

Doreen paddled up me with her camera in hand and said - this is the truth! "I'll need some help to direct this Shoot . Would you help me do the directing, please?" By now it was 11:00 AM. Divine intervention was about to make its first move.

Sunlight began to invade our set location, and soon would be inexorably devouring the shaded bench. A lovely level of contrasty lighting was about to consume our set!

"Just do as I'm doing, eh ? Watch how I shoot it." I'd decided to go ahead and do the "Trial Shoot" - post haste! So the famous "Tramp" Shoot began. Rehearsal or actual Shoot. or something. I now owned the Shoot. How could we just fold up with just a measly old rehearsal and disappoint everyone? Director and editor, was the mantle of greatness descending on my shoulders ? Or was I was being readied for the public pillory?

You probably can imagine the structure of the Shoot. Establishing shot, close-ups of ladies chatting, seated on the bench. Enter the "tramp". Then - you've got the idea - a sequence of close-ups of the tramp's progressive invasive moves, reaction shots, the tramp expanding his territory, the ladies leaving the bench, holding noses, etc., one at a time and finally the tramps' adopting the recumbent position, the bench to himself, hat over his face, as the sunlight descended over the Tramp's lower body. THE END.

That was the plan - complete with all the lame circumstances.

Weee- e!!!, Rewind. After I'd captured the first few shots, the lady with the camcorder (near the relaxed umbrella person) protested, "Hey, you're spoiling my shots. You!" (The "you" was me.)

You're moving in and out of the frame, stopping the action all the time." We had been transported to the era - way, way back - to where the stage action was shot in one long piece until the camera ran out of film. "All this stopping and starting."

The umbrella man took up her cause and roared out, "Yair. You too with the camera, beside me, get out of my frame, as well. And you up there, poking your

camera up close at the people on the bench. You're wrecking my Shoot, too!"

A predestined disaster. Stemming from inadequate communication or lack of skills - or both !

Doreen was still fumbling around with her camera. God knows what she captured. By this time, it was about 1:00 PM. I could see what another disastrous event was looming. There was a stand of shade-giving trees to one side of us that had kept the bench in the shade. The bright Summer sun had moved and begun to light up the ground near the extreme end of the bench. Soon the bench would be partly in sunlight, partly in shade.

A lovely mixture. Such a nice, evenly lit frame. I made a concluding shot of the resting tramp, a close-up of his hat being slid over his closed eyes.

For the next Meeting, I had completed a brave attempt at editing what I'd taken. Titles and piano music. I'm confident in saying that some of the laughter arising from the Club audience reflected how ridiculous the whole Shoot had turned out. "Lights!" Doreen rose from her chair and passionately complained, "I didn't get any help at the Shoot and what you saw wasn't what I wrote in my script. It's been

ruined." (Her script? It's the kind of thing you'd find in Readers' Digest or in a kid's comic book.) A withering, vitriolic stare greeted me as our eyes met; her concluding comment; her umbrage then transformed into a dramatic exit, "Hhhmmmmph!"

There were no other members' movies scheduled to be shown. So we moved on to Part 1 of the Show Reel from England.

The above account of the Shoot isn't an unintended melodrama, my friends. It's the stark, raw truth . Having "faith" can be a fatal, foolhardy mistake. Another "moral" of the above story revealed that our club needed ongoing Workshops dedicated entirely to translating an "idea, or a simple story or short narrative" from one person's "head" to a written Shot List, in sequences.

AND members actually DOING and practising the skills needed to transform an "idea in the head" to "movie sequences to the camcorder", etc. Actual hands on.

Divine intervention and faith ain't enough.

Sam from Spuzzum

Talking Point



LEE PRESCOTT FAGI. Writes...

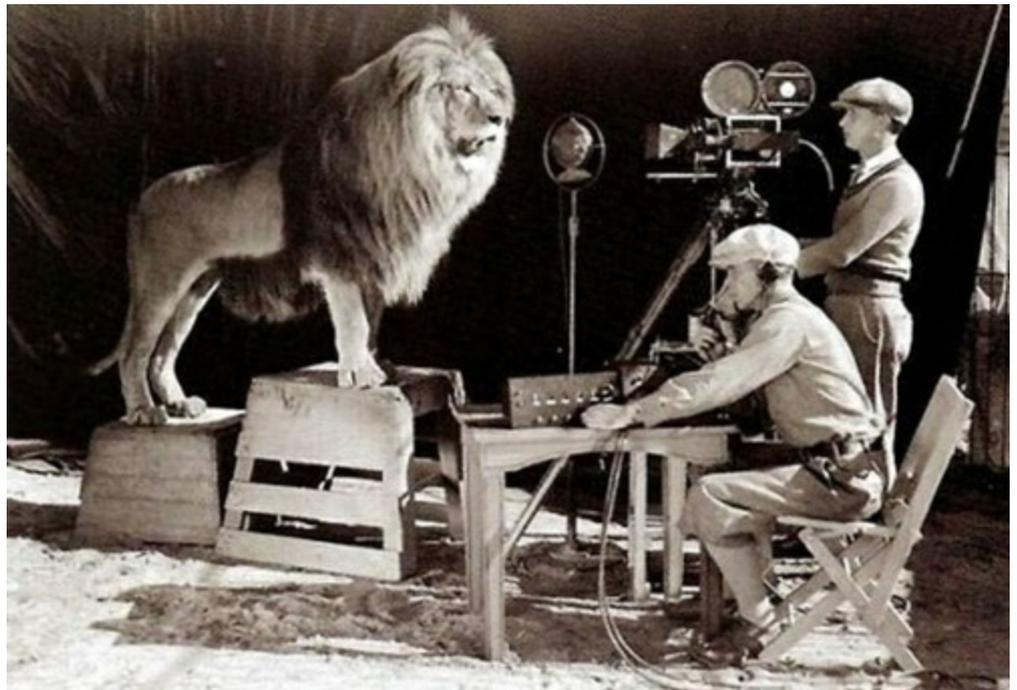
Filming and recording the MGM Trade Mark with which we are all familiar.

You might not know but the MGM Roaring Lion Trade Mark is actually compiled" from seven Lions!

The animals used were all real.

This photograph shows the start with the, by today's standards, primitive equipment.

What you do not see are the armed guards!!!!





Noel Leader contributes

This happens to be a true story!!!! Sometimes the impossible happens – especially in some remote parts of rural Australia!

Who Employs These Idiots ... A True Story!

A man living in Kandos (near country town Mudgee in NSW, Australia) received a bill in March for his as yet unused new gas line stating that he owed \$0.00.

He ignored it and threw it away. In April he received another bill and threw that one away too. The following month the gas company sent him a very nasty note stating that they were going to cancel his gas line if he didn't send them \$0.00 by return mail.

He called them, talked to them, and they said it was a computer error and they would take care of it. The following month he decided that it was about time that he tried out the troublesome gas line figuring that if there was usage on the account it would put an end to this ridiculous predicament.

However, when he went to use the gas, it had been cut off.

He called the gas company who apologized for the computer error once again and said that they would take care of it. The next day he got a bill for \$0.00 stating that payment was now overdue. Assuming that having spoken to them the previous day the latest bill was yet another mistake, he ignored it, trusting that the company would be as good as their word and sort the problem out.

The next month he got a bill for \$0.00. This bill also stated that he had 10 days to pay his account or the company would have to take steps to recover the debt.

Finally, giving in, he thought he would beat the gas company at their own game and mailed them a cheque for \$0.00. The computer duly processed his account and returned a statement to the effect that he now owed the gas company nothing at all.

A week later, the manager of the Mudgee branch of the Westpac Banking Corporation called our hapless friend and asked him what he was doing writing cheque for \$0.00. After a

lengthy explanation the bank manager replied that the \$0.00 cheque had caused their cheque processing software to fail.

The bank could therefore not process ANY cheques They had received from ANY of their customers that day because the Cheque for \$0.00 had caused the computer to crash.

The following month the man received a letter from the gas company claiming that his cheque had bounced and that he now owed them \$0.00 and unless he sent a cheque by return mail they would take immediate steps to recover the debt.

At this point, the man decided to file a debt harassment claim against the gas company. It took him nearly two hours to convince the clerks at the local courthouse that he was not joking. They subsequently helped him in the drafting of statements which were considered substantive evidence of the aggravation and difficulties he had been forced to endure during this debacle.

The matter was heard in the Magistrate's Court in Mudgee and the outcome was this:

The gas company was ordered to:

[1]. Immediately rectify their computerized accounts system or Show Cause, within 10 days, why the matter should not be referred to a higher court for consideration under Company Law.

[2]. Pay the bank dishonor fees incurred by the man.

[3]. Pay the bank dishonor fees incurred by all the Westpac clients whose cheques had been bounced on the day our friend's had been processed.

[4]. Pay the claimant's court costs; and

[5]. Pay the claimant a total of \$1500 per month for the 5 month period March to July inclusive as compensation for the aggravation they had caused their client to suffer.

And all this over \$0.00 ...

This story can also be viewed on the ABC website – “Who employs these idiots?”

Remember, these "people" walk among us and breathe the same air we do.

And they breed and they perpetuate the same havoc.

And they VOTE! Scary, very scary! Really scary!

Richard Abram asks...

AMATEURS: WHAT ARE THEY?

I have been reading in past months in the SoCo mag's that there is still a problem about exactly what is an amateur film maker.

My Oxford Dictionary says; “mateur; It is a person that does something as a pastime rather than as a profession”

So when said professional person is at work making movies he/she is a professional. Like wise, when he/she is at play and doing things for fun and not for money they are amateurs.

Their professional background will no doubt be an asset to them and their group when making films - so what!

This is just a side effect, as all of us have different skills that will benefit different aspects of our hobby.

I remember when I was in a film making club in London a film was made in 16mm and won the 10 best award of the year.

It went out being on show as an amateur made movie. There were many people who were professionals working on it. None of them were cameramen from what I can remember and I don't remember anyone being a professional actor.

At the end of its success as an amateur run it was sold! It was then blown up to 35mm. Now it was a professional movie. It was withdrawn from the amateur circuit and went out as a supporting feature nationwide.

So is this film an amateur film or a professional film? I say it is both.

What do you think?

DOMESTIC VIDEO - LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

LEE PRESCOTT FACI.

The Technologically Challenged

The complexities of 21st. Century life unmasked:-

I suppose we've all heard the term "Vertically Challenged" referring to persons lacking in height. By that I don't mean "dwarfish" but adults of small stature.

Several years ago I knew a grown woman pushing 4 feet 2 inches. She was possessed of a ferocious temper and would "fire up" for the least of reasons in decibels equivalent to a thousand watts for every inch of her 50!

If one was videoing anywhere she was present, i.e. a wedding, the recording level had to be manually controlled because she would "let fly" for all sorts of reasons from trying to see past people or past gravestones or dive bombing Seagulls. I would ask you to *imagine* these difficult circumstances. Life these days is somewhat more quiet as the lady now reposes in a permanent somnambulant posture 6 feet underground.

However, the "Vertically Challenged" isn't the only current video problem. We now have the "Technologically Challenged"! These persons find it extremely difficult to grasp the niceties present in our consumer driven technologically paced world from PCs, multi speakered Home Cinemas to the humble DVD and Blu-ray machine, to whit:-



bought a top of the range machine from Onkle Pan-e-sonic, the

manual runs to 76 A4 pages, and by the time one has obeyed the unwritten rule of "RTFM" and arrived at page 20 most of what's gone before is forgotten! These "technoscribes" live in a lexiconised world of their own. They use a "contradictory" specialised "technobabble".

Sis. in Law is a widow of 83 and as "fit as a fiddle" and is often to be seen Saturday Night Jazzing

at her local RBL Club. Living 149.6 miles from my Hacienda means that I cannot be of much help with her technical problems real or imagined as these arise.

She used to call out "The Boy" from the shop in his pretty white van to come and sort out her DVD etc. when her TV screen severally informed her that "This Disc is Unplayable" and it was ejected.

She had informed him that the machine was new but she was fed up with it and her pile of DVDs was growing. Somewhat bemusedly the young "technician" informed her that she'd put the DVD in "downside up"! Then more problems, but the shop



manager told her that the "engineer" was away on a sabbatical and thought he was headed for Mars!

SO: Her neighbour Joe agreed to assist her as the problems arose and her natural female astuteness foundered.

There followed the complexities of the "Zapper" aka the remote control. She told Joe it wouldn't work. Joe pointed out that Heinrich der hund had to be shifted from his position in front of the TV which he likes to watch.

That achieved it still didn't work until Joe suggested she point it the right way round. Now after the time it has taken, more or less, for her to get some idea of these *modus operandi* I could have produced an epic to rival "Cleopatra".

To add to further "frustrations" Joe, her neighbour, suggested that the way things were going it might be easier if he moved in – but: and it was a "BIG BUT" - 'cos his wife wanted to know why he spent so much time "with the woman next door"?

Sis. In law is 83 and Joe is 80! ---- Female astuteness NEVER FADES, DOES IT?

Latterly Sis. In Law decided she'd like to "DO" some videoing at a wedding she'd been invited to.

I advised her which shop to visit and to explain all preferably to the shop manager. I wrote a detailed letter for her. (Fortunately she's kept away from computers in kind consideration of mine and Joe's sanity!)

I explained fully about L.S, W.A., C.U., B.C.U. and the dreaded zooooom! About the red button on and off. Steadiness, Hose-piping, (she got that as she's an avid gardener). I suggested she had the camera set to W.A. and to leave it there then all she had to do was to physically move back for group shots move in close for "intimate" shots and quite close if she wanted portrait style/mug shots. I also explained hard about battery charging and the safety aspects.

11.50pm the night before her great shoot she 'phones me to say that she forgot to ask about "where she puts The Film"!!! Exercising extreme self control, (what a surprise), I carefully explained about the card!

A few days after this stupendous event a 'phone call. The man at the shop had extracted the card for Madam and "played it for her".... Over the moon she asked me if "I would make a DVD for her – right side up"!

The card arrived via Royal Mail wrapped up like the new baby Prince George of Cambridge. As I inserted it into my Casablanca machine, the card that was, not the Prince; I thought – "OK, what the hell, here we go" --- to view (and edit) a virtually perfect video.

She even managed to bribe the 19th century Vicar, who still thinks the organ motor is an instrument of the Devil, to allow her close enough to video the exchange of rings etc. (She told me a £20 note, bottle of Scotch and bared teeth worked wonders!)

Obviously "there's life in the old 'dog' yet" – and she didn't even have to cope with a 50 inch "Vertically Challenged" strident female! Like she said: "God blesses those who bless themselves"!



Phil Marshman on



ARE YOU STILL USING A VIDEO CAMERA TO MAKE YOUR FILMS?

Back when I started trying to make films with cine, the star item of equipment was the camera. There was a certain

amount of camera snobbery, which was very often associated with how much it had cost, but that didn't ensure that the owner made better films. The quality of the films has always been down to the nut behind the wheel.

Once I got a bit serious I did try to get the best camera I could afford that was fit for my purpose. I ended up with about four or five cameras in the end, so when video came in I intended that I would wait until the right camcorder came along and that would be it. My first camcorder was a Sony V600 which was Hi8. It was fit for my purpose, and I got it for half price on offer in a Sony Shop.

I was quite happy with my V600, but then digital came along. I opted for Digital8 on the basis that it used the same tapes as Hi8. I was perfectly happy with Digital8, but it was a mistake because Mini-DV was what I should have gone for on account of the Frome Five Minute Festival and the SoCo Regional Competition, as many entries for this were entered on M-DV.

Digital was to be the key to everything. This is proving to be so and it's everywhere. Very few people manage to escape it even if you haven't got a computer or a mobile phone. A Health and Safety note here. The mobile phone is probably the most dangerous item we own. (There's a film in this). People can not leave them alone. They walk long the street lost in their use. Worst when they're driving. Still if they do get run over they can ring for the ambulance themselves, but not so good if you are the victim of their misuse. What irritates me about their owners is that when they ring it takes them ages to find them. (Sorry to be so sexist).

I have a smart phone. How cool is that? I've made a film with my smart phone in HD. How about that then? I've even got a book about it available from your local Waterstones. I'm not really advertising here, because in many places this will be the only proper bookshop you've got. This is all down to digital.

The BBC and ITN make a lot of use of smart phone footage in their news bulletins. Youngsters send one another movies they've shot on their phones to the friends phones or computers. Then there is YouTube which is used by everyone.

Actually, YouTube is one of the most useful film making tools out there. There are tutorials galore, reviews and examples - check it out.

On my smart phone I can take full HD video with sound recorded from a microphone plugged into it. Try getting a reasonably priced HD video camera with a microphone socket. I can control the exposure and the focus, and there are apps that will allow me to do some basic editing too. The iPod Touch, iPad and various other types of tablet have these capabilities too. However, as is pointed out in my book, the iPhone is a phone, and whilst it has these capabilities that's what it is, a phone. But it does demonstrate how things are moving to a point where we can have just one portable piece of equipment that will do it all, although editing is still best done on a computer (less eye strain).

I've got another book that gives advice on how to make films with a Canon EOS stills camera. Several TV programmes have been shot on these cameras. There's a cinema film, The Projectionists, (probably not the only one) that was shot on these cameras too, but as the book points out these are stills cameras even if you can plug a microphone into them. To use these cameras, and devisees, you really need a tripod or some other kind of support. It's not just the Canon EOS cameras that have these capabilities. Many digital stills cameras, even my humble Canon IXUS has it (with built in microphone but no microphone socket). Nevertheless, digital has given us more choice and the day when one will do all is creeping up on us.

When it comes down to it, it is not the equipment you use but the nut behind the wheel. The day when the equipment takes over it's time to get in the box.

Don't forget to tune in to BBC Radio Wiltshire, The Mark O'Donnell Show at about 10.10 am Saturdays, for Saturday Morning at the Pictures. You'll be pleased to know I'm only on about once every eight weeks so you maybe lucky and catch it when I'm not on. "I don't live in Wiltshire," I hear you cry. Well you can't escape, because if you go to the Radio Wiltshire web site you can hear it anywhere live on you computer, your Smartphone, your tablet, your iPod Touch or your Kindle anywhere in the world. If you miss it, it is still available for a week on the same website. If you live in Wiltshire they are always looking for new reviewers, but you wont have to worry about income tax.

You cannot escape – but that's digital.

Phil Marshman

Have you?

Got any video tips to pass to our readers?

Used a new piece of kit or gadget you could review?

Overcome a problem in a novel way?

PLEASE write it up so other readers can benefit.



NORTH V SOUTH COMPETITION 2013

This year, the North v South Competition celebrates its 39th year.

Unfortunately, there is a real danger that this could be its last year unless we get more support in both the number of entries and the number of people attending. The past 3 years has seen a substantial decline in both.

The organisers are determined that this will not happen and to this end are introducing some changes in the hope that these will reverse that trend.

The major change is that there will no longer be a Northern or Southern Heat. Instead, there will only be a Grand Final hosted simultaneously by [Altrincham Video Society](#) and [Orpington Video & Film Makers](#) on Sunday 24th November.

Judging will remain the same with the top 5 Northern films competing against the top 5 Southern Films for the 'John Wright Trophy'. The 'Harry Adams Trophy' will be presented to the runner-up. All entries will receive judge's comments. This year, the final judges will be asked to put **all** of the top 10 films in an 'order of merit'.

In addition to the top 10 films being screened at both shows, the remainder of the Northern entries and as many Southern entries as time permits will be screened at the Northern show. At the Southern show, the remainder of the Southern entries and as many Northern entries as time permits will be screened.

There will be no announcement prior to the show as to how any film has fared in the competition and the program on the day will simply list the films entered.

At the Southern show, the first session will be a screening of all the Southern entries that did not make the top 5 alternating with as many Northern entries that did not make their top 5 as time will allow.

It is only once these have been screened that entrants will be aware if their entry has made it through to the final 10. After a refreshment break, the top 10 films will be screened in the 10 down to 1 'order of merit' as decided by the final judges.

creening the films in this manner will ensure that the suspense of who has won will be kept going as long as possible.

The entry fee remains at £10.00 per film and there is no limit to the number of films you can enter. Don't forget...each entry entitles you to 2 free tickets for the Grand Final itself.

It is hoped that having only one festival day, a guarantee that your film will be screened as well as a new format for the show itself will encourage you to enter a film this year and to attend on the day.

The theme for this year is '**REVOLUTION**' and an entry form and full rules can be found on our website (Please click on the link below).

www.n-v-s.co.uk

The closing date for entries is Friday 11th October. I look forward to receiving your entry(s) and to seeing you in November.

Thank you for your support.

Mike Coad (on behalf of Orpington Video & Film Makers)

NvS Rules

1. The "North v South" competition is for amateur/non-commercial movie-making groups or clubs based in the UK. There will be two sections, one for the north and one for the south. The boundary is an east-west line drawn through Stoke-on-Trent.

2. Groups are invited to enter an original film to a theme selected by the previous year's judges. Entries may be the work of one group member but must be entered by a named, established club or group. Multiple entries from one group are acceptable but a film must not have been entered into this competition before.

3. The host club for each section will be responsible for collating the movies, arranging the venue and choosing judges for the pre-judging to select five entries from each section to go forward to the final. The ten selected movies will then compete for the John Wright Trophy, with the runner up receiving the Harry Adams Trophy. The result will be announced at simultaneous final presentations on a mutually agreed date.

4. The organisers retain the right to make copies of any entries for distribution to other amateur clubs and to provide

copies for the IAC library. The copyright of all entries remains with the producers.

5. It is the responsibility of each entrant to clear all copyright material. The organisers reserve the right to request proof of such clearance.

6. Entries must conform to the set theme and must not exceed twenty minutes running time (black to black). Each entry must be on a separate disc or tape and be preceded by ten seconds of black and silence.

7. Entries must be the original work of members of the submitting group. Use of actors who are not group members is acceptable.

8. The final judging will be arranged alternately by the northern and southern host clubs. Final judging will be by an independent panel of judges who will be asked to provide written comments on each entry.

9. Submission of an entry will be deemed to be an acceptance of these rules. Any queries should be referred to the organisers



One To Watch

Selected Movies on the WWW

Hi all.

Not sure about the music – but the laser lighting onto the sails of the Sydney Opera House is truly amazing!

How lucky can one be to live in Sydney!



Enjoy!

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/vZljVZ1vc4c>

Noel.

Hi all.

This video has just won top prize in the world's ten best advertisements!



Well worth watching!

<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/Dxy4n0UT82o?rel=0>

Noel

Hi Allzzzzz..

PAPER IS NOT DEAD! How to put your message across! I don't think that this is a "norty" one! (It depends where you're sitting I guess)!

http://www.youtube.com/embed/V_gOZDWQj3Q?rel=0



TRIPODS - You've used em, (sometimes)? Here's a new use for consideration. great way of getting great tracking shots.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fGmCBnD-D0>



I thought that you might like to see this first class promotional video on South Africa produced for *SAMF by a company run by a professional S.A. friend of mine. Perhaps it'll make you want to visit Z.A.? *(SAMF = South African Mathematics Foundation).

<http://youtu.be/RCWaxjAHlI4>



Cheers Lee P

SoCo Regional Committee

Chair: Anne Vincent FACI

Phone/Fax: 01305 780140, annevincentvsw@fsmail.net

Vice Chair: Alan Creamer FACI

Treasurer: Darren Cummings

Phone & Fax: 01305 820280

Email: acreamer12@btinternet.com

Secretary: Sue Minns

Tel: 01305 832 902

e-mail: eagminns@btinternet.com

Competition Officer: Phil Marshman FACI

Phone: 01225 764752, Frome@philmar.demon.co.uk

115 Dursley Road, Trowbridge, BA14 0NR

Technical Officer: John Davies - Phone: 01202 698943

SoCo News Editor: Pip Critten

Phone: 01752 361210 & 07771 967804, pip@pipcritten.com

12 Trelawney Avenue, St. Budeaux, Plymouth, PL5 1RH

Membership Changes

New & Rejoined:

Change of address:

Mr A Fry, now at Winchester

Cancelled / Removed:

Mr M Bolton, Yeovil

Mr F Hewitt, Winchester

Resigned:

Mr J Coleman, Co. Claire, Eire

Mr G Pitt, Tatworth

Struck off:

Deceased:

Moved into SoCo Region:

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SoCo Diary Dates

To have your event featured here, drop an email to

pip@pipcritten.com

For a full list of national and international events

[Click Here](#)

The mysoco.org site has
closed down.

I
The

SoCo News

Archive is now hosted by

Bournemouth Video Club

Go to

<http://bhvideoclub.com/latest->

[news/soco-news-letters/](http://bhvideoclub.com/latest-news/soco-news-letters/)



Copy Deadline for Nov - Dec 2013 Issue

To reach Editor by 15th Oct 2013