

North Thames Region



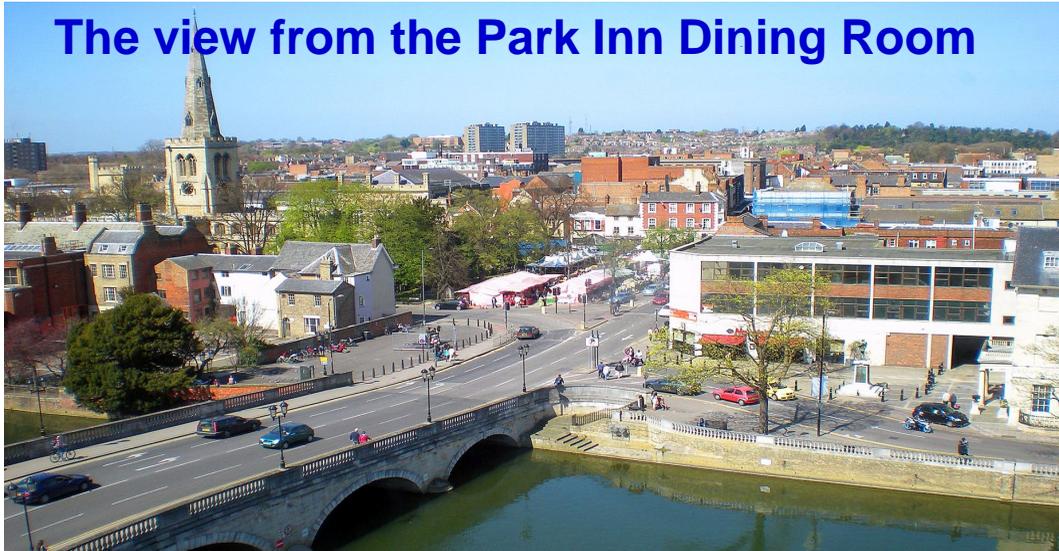
The Film & Video Institute

www.theiac.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

March—April 2014

The view from the Park Inn Dining Room



We host BIAFF 2014 at the Park Inn by Radisson Hotel, Bedford — Why not come along? *see p.12*

- DSLRs uncovered! *pp 10—11*
- Making a prize-winning documentary *pp 6—7*
- Moaner Geezer/Gal is back! *p 5*
- and much more!

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Chairman's Chat

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



Brenda Granshaw FACI

One of the issues raised at North Thames Day was our involvement, or lack of it, with our AV clubs.

I was delighted to be invited by Dick Williams to judge the Essex AV Group's Four Minute Competition in Rayleigh. As I'd never judged AV before, I did think he was taking a chance, which he has probably lived to regret!

Those I asked said it was the same as judging movies, however I have now learnt that more weight needs to be given to the shots themselves.

I have to say that all the sequences were beautifully framed and a joy to watch, which made reaching a decision very difficult.

In the end, I settled on **Go Green** which was a well thought-out story sequence showing how looking after the environment was done naturally years ago and is not an innovation of the young today.

Congratulations to Heather and Gordon Clarke for this most enjoyable sequence.

While on the subject of AV, can I also remind you of the East Anglian AV Competition on Saturday 22nd March at Margaretting Village Hall. If you have not watched AV then this a golden opportunity to do so.

I should also mention the Mid Thames AV Day to be held on 27th April at the Community Centre, Woosehill, Wokingham RG41 3SW.

Our new 4 x 4 Competition is getting underway. It is a pity that we could not encourage 16 clubs to enter the Competition with a programme of entertaining films but I do recognise that the number of film makers in some clubs is dwindling.

Details of the venues for the heats are on page 7.

Another issue raised at the North Thames AGM was the amount of out of date information, which exists both on the clubs' websites and also the contact information included in the Newsletter. I regard the 4 x 4 heats as a good opportunity to ask clubs for contact details so that we can at least up-date the magazine. I hope you will arrive at your heat with this information. It should also be an opportunity for you to tell me what the Council can do to help clubs.

Finally, I should remind you that BIAFF is in the Park Inn Hotel, Bedford this year. If you have not booked to come for the weekend, do think about coming on Saturday 12 April for the mini cinemas. There is such a range of films that you are guaranteed to have an entertaining day. (see p. 12)



Club Matters



Once again, the importance of how a Club communicates and sells itself is put under the spotlight.

Aivar Kaulins, FACI, the former Publicity Officer of both Harrow CVS and the NTR, argues strongly for the importance of the job.

How many cine video clubs in our region, or for that matter in the whole country, have a publicity officer appointment on the management committee, whose main or possibly sole responsibility is the promotion of that club to the general public?

Not many, I fear!

All too often, the responsibility for that vital task is thrown at a committee member in addition to his or her other duties.

Not good enough!

On the committee, obviously the most important member is the Chairman, in overall charge. Equally important is the Club Secretary, in charge of communication and all administrative matters. In no particular order (!) must be the Treasurer, without whom the club would soon grind to a halt. Is there also a President? Perhaps so, but this is usually more an honorary appointment, rather than a vital day-to-day working assignment. This leaves the Programme Secretary, responsible for arranging the programme for all club meetings throughout the year, and for checking that arrangements for these are in place.

Finally, we come to the Publicity Officer, and here lies the problem, for I think that the job's importance is all too often undervalued.

In order to continue existing in its present form, a Club must make every effort to make sure that its existence is known in its locality. In other words, it must make every effort to attract new members, for unfortunately numbers will diminish with the passing of time for a variety of reasons.

At this stage, it is not my intention to brief you on how to publicise your club, only to warn you that inaction in this respect can - and more than likely will - have dire consequences. In the past year or two, no less than three clubs in our region have ceased to exist.

Tom Hardwick FACI takes issue with a comment made about the 2013 Movie Festival in the last Newsletter. Tom writes:

Ken Mills mentioned in his article that after Movie Festival Day last November, nobody had noticed any difference in the picture quality between upscaled DVDs and Blu-rays (BD).

This is interesting as one of my club presentations is a demonstration of why HD is so much better than SD and why it's important to shoot in high definition these days. The Blu-ray A/B test I have made up is pretty convincing, the four times resolution increase that BD has over DVD is quite an eye-opener to many.

But there have been times when I've noticed that club projectors are not always up to showing the difference. They do a grand job of showing DVD, but really struggle with the difficult job of 1920 x 1080 projection, softening it considerably.

So my genteel thought is that perhaps the projector used at the AGM is past its prime?



Enfield FM Chairman, Eric Jukes, talks about bringing old photos back to life - and makes you an offer!

I was very interested to read Tom Hardwick's excellent illustrated article in the February 2014 "Film & Video Maker": "*Tom Hardwick brings old photos back to life ...*".

I've been interested in digitisation for many years now and have "invested" ("wasted" in my wife's view!) in a large Book Scanner and a High Speed A3 Scanner for various historic documents, newspapers, and magazines in connection with another interest of mine.

I also have the boxes of 35mm slides from my AV days, but, more importantly to me, I have several thousand (mostly black and white) 35mm negatives, a few 120 size, as well as some World War II negatives from my late father and father-in-law.

These are 6x7's.

I've used several of the methods described in Tom's article, including the Epson 1610 Photo Scanner with slide or negative adapters and the Epson Perfection 750 Pro with adapters. Both produced excellent results, but, bearing in mind the vast quantity I wanted scanning, I did try an agency who scanned a few of my negatives as a sample.

I was going to use the service and then they bumped up their prices. So I took a different route which was to buy an "industrial" scanner.

I bought the Fuji Frontier SP2000 Scanner which is a real heavy-weight at 19 stone!

The machine was intended to send each scan to the photo printer, but, in the case of stand-alone use, it will send it to a computer server. It scans negatives at high speed - but more slowly for a high resolution scan.

The highest resolution isn't that high - equivalent to a print of 15 x 12. I've got it to scan 120 negatives and have just got it working on mounted slides - much slower as they have to be fed in one at a time.

Maybe Tom's methods are better for slides.

The advantage of the machine is its relatively high speed and that adjustments can be made for colour balance and sharpness and the setting "held" for as many subsequent negatives or slides as required.

I am intending to use some of the resulting scans in my films.



Fuji SP2000 Scanner



Moaner Geezer/Gal

Anything in the amateur film world you'd like to have an anonymous rant about?



YES! AUDIO-VISUAL!

When I chose to make films as a hobby, I could have chosen still photography. I did not go down that road and now I am glad that I did not.

Imagine, therefore, my astonishment to discover that AV is included in THE major film festival for the amateur world in this country.

Even more odd that it should be included in the magazine of the IAC!

Even more bizarre is the notion that AV should kick off BIAFF!!!

Now I know that AV devotees are, or can be, members of the IAC, but BIAFF is a FILM Competition and Festival and the AV'ers have their own national Competition and Festival, which, as far as I know, does not include movies.

And now the Regional Councils of the IAC are debating whether they should include AV in their annual competitions.

The answer is NO!

It has to be said that the picture quality in many AV sequences is superb and the sound is nearly always excellent. It is also true that we can learn from each other and should. But I am a movie person and frankly get bored with long AV productions that often are trying to be movies. So let us all enjoy our own hobbies and be content with each others' festivals.

And how about devoting a Mini Cinema to AV at BIAFF? That way I can choose to go or not.

What do you think?

4 x 4 Competition

By the time you read this, the 4 x 4 Competition should be underway:

Monday March 3rd: Round D: Harrow / South Essex / Ealing

Saturday March 15th: Round B: Colchester / Mid-Suffolk / Potters Bar / Wanstead & Woodford

Tuesday March 18th: Round A: St. Albans / Bourne End / Walthamstow / Luton

Wednesday March 19th: Round C: Hemel Hempstead / Enfield / Staines

The Final will be on Sunday May 18th, hosted by Staines VM at 2.30 pm at Laleham Village Hall, The Broadway, Laleham, Surrey, TW18 1SB.

Did you realise this Newsletter appears on the IAC website about 3/4 weeks before you receive your paper copy? (www.theiac.org > IAC > Regions > NTR IAC > Newsletters)

Making a Winner!

“Masterglass”, a beautifully crafted documentary about making a modern stained-glass window, won HACCA 2013.

It was made by Andrew Pennycook, a member of Hemel Hempstead Movie Makers.

Andrew shows here how he set about making the documentary:



Andrew Pennycook

Petri Anderson is a stained-glass designer and artist based in Abbots Langley, near Watford.

Three years ago he was commissioned by Haileybury College, Hertford, to design and install in the college chapel two stained-glass windows to celebrate the college's 150th anniversary.

As a result of a chance remark at a club meeting, I was able to contact Petri, and he agreed to let me film the process – or at least, most of it, since the final designs had already been agreed by then.



Petri Anderson at work

Petri was working to a very tight timetable since the college wanted the windows to be installed before term started in September and in time for a dedication ceremony scheduled for the same month.

We therefore agreed, quite properly, that I would fit in with his schedule and visit him at his workshop/studio as and when he felt that it would be appropriate.

The process involved at least ten clearly defined steps and altogether I made several visits over a period of five months to film them, each visit lasting up to two hours.

Although Petri was very happy to pause in his work to allow me to set up the camera if necessary, I mainly filmed as he worked, and because there was much repetition in the process, I could shoot from a variety of angles and distances without his having to stop work.

Once filming was complete I had, literally, hours of footage. The challenge was to produce a film that not only did justice to the length of the process and the skill of the artist, but also was not so long that the audience would fall asleep!

On reflection, my priority was the former. I felt that the process was so intrinsically fascinating – seeing a skilled craftsman at work – and that the film was so obviously telling a story in a logical sequence from a clear beginning towards a definite end that most viewers could not help but be drawn into it and would therefore stay awake!

After several weeks' work, including consulting with Petri to ensure accuracy, a documentary telling the story of the Haileybury windows was completed – lasting 27 minutes

That, however, was not the end of the story. For, to show my gratitude to Petri for his friendly co-operation, I decided to create a much shorter film, which he could use on his website as publicity for his work, if he wished.

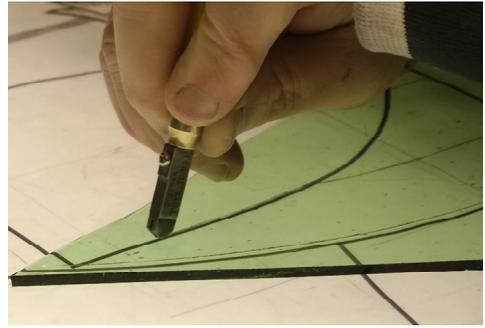
With the documentary as the basis, I began to cut and trim, concentrating on the process, until I could go no further without losing essential elements, ending up with the eight minute film ***Masterglass*** which was entered, successfully, in the 2013 HACCA Competition.

No special equipment was used in making the film. The camera was a Panasonic SD-900 and the editing package Pinnacle Studio 14. The versatility of the camera to film in a variety of situations and conditions was such that no additional lighting was needed.

Andrew recognises something that many amateur film-makers don't—for such a specialised subject area, 10 minutes is probably the maximum length that a general audience can be expected to stay interested. So, make two films!

One longer version for the specialist interest, and a 10-Minute Maximum film for the general audience.

Ed.



Cutting the glass to shape



Creating shape and texture in the painting



Soldering the leads between the glass



NTR 100 CLUB

Contact: John Farrer

Tel.: 01462 434948 E-Mail: jffarrer@madasafish.com

The Draws for January & February were made
at the NTR Council Meeting on January 28th.

Each of the following wins £12:

January		February	
32	Fred Curtis <i>ex-Hornchurch</i>	70	Beryl Jones ?
39	Sheila Goodwin <i>ex-Hornchurch</i>	103	Nick Gale <i>Harrow CVS</i>
56	Michael Slowe <i>Finchley FM</i>	61	John Astin <i>Potters Bar FM</i>
10	Ted Bateman <i>St. Albans FM</i>		
107	Martin Page <i>Wanstead & Woodford MM</i>		
29	Ron Jones <i>Potters Bar FM</i>		

2014 has started on a firm footing with an increase in the beginning of year renewals !

Well done and very many thanks!

You will see that from the confidence you have given us, we have already increased the January Draw to six prizes and March will have the same !

To help you, here is a choice of actions for you now and/or at your next club meeting:-

Buy your first share now in time for the draw at the end of March !

and/or

Cajole a friend to join the NTR100 Club or buy another share !

and/or

Make sure your club owns a share!

or if you can't do any of the above

Buy yourself another share!

A share costs only £12 annually and we are aiming to have 60 prizes this year!

For an application form just send the e-mail address above. *John Farrer*



Welcome!

To our new members:
Matthew Friend, London
Roland Gillott, Bucks.

To join the IAC , contact:
IAC, The Film and Video Institute,
Dorset House,
Regent Park,
Kingston Road,
LEATHERHEAD, Surrey, KT22 7PL.
Tel.: 01372 824350
E-Mail: admin@theiac.org.uk



SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

FRIDAY MARCH 7th 2014

The Staines Silver Salver Competition
at Laleham Village Hall, The Broadway,
Laleham, Middlesex, TW18 1RZ. For further
information, contact Cathy Clarke on 01783 433580

SATURDAY MARCH 11th 2014

The East Anglian Audio-Visual Competition
at Margaretting Village Hall, Wantz Road, Ingatestone,
Essex, CM4 0EP.
Judging starts at 9.45 am. Gala Show & Presentation at 7 pm.
For details: Phone Dick Williams on 01708 748580

FRIDAY APRIL 11th - SUNDAY APRIL 13th 2014

BIAFF 2014 hosted by the North Thames Region at the Park Inn by Radisson,
Bedford, MK42 0AR.
Booking Forms were in "Film & Video Maker", and are available from the
IAC website, or from Jack Gill. (*see p.12*)

THURSDAY APRIL 17th 2014

Harrow Cine and Video Society's Spring Public Show
at Pinner Village Hall, Chapel Lane Car Park, Pinner HA5 1AA.
£6 inc. refreshments. Doors open 7.30 pm for 8 pm.
Contact Ken Gale: 020 8424 0235



DSLR s –the new kid on the block Are they a threat to camcorders?

**Eileen Kenning from Finchley FM asks the questions.
Enfield FM Chairman Eric Jukes gives the answers.**

Eileen: “What does DSLR actually mean to the layperson?”

Eric: DSLR stands for Digital Single Lens Reflex (camera). Think of your Nikon F, Pentax Spotmatic and Canon AE-1 35mm camera of yesteryear. They were SLRs minus the D!

In late 2008 Canon developed a full-size i.e. same size as a 35mm frame, CMOS image sensor and launched the Canon EOS 5D Mark II as the first DSLR with full HD video recording capability.

It therefore had the capability of recording professional quality video as well as the capability of high quality (21.1 megapixel) still photographs. Professional film-makers and broadcasters began to notice the camera’s features including facilitating integrating video and still images, as well as its capability of producing a film “look” for video.

The DSLR videography movement was born.

Eileen: “What are the advantages of using a DSLR camera?”

Eric: “Some independent film-makers like to create a “film look” to their digital video productions. Part of this “look” is shallow focus, or a shallow depth of field, so that the subject is emphasised and the background de-emphasised. You are shooting in true HD. Video camcorders costing thousands of pounds usually have sensors which are tiny in comparison to those in DSLRs and particularly the 5D Mark II.

I think that one essential advantage of the DSLR camera (just as it was for the SLR camera!) is the facility to have interchangeable lenses. Most camcorders have a zoom lens and no interchangeable lens, although occasionally they sport a “wide-angle converter”. For video shooting, it is recommended that prime lenses are used - i.e. not zoom. Some video makers use their old 35mm primes which can be put onto the 5D Mark II with an adapter, although often it precludes the use of auto-exposure.

Eileen: “What is the approximate cost?”

Eric: “£2,159 for the newer 5D Mark III, and that is for the body only. I bought a “refurbished” Mark II body for just over £1000. Then you need the lenses - this is a difficult area - there is a nice 50mm Canon prime for just over £70 (I’ve got it and it is very nice - light-weight as well) or, at the opposite end of the scale, there is a pro Canon 50mm lens at over a thousand pounds.

As mentioned, you may be able to pick up some old Nikon lenses from 35mm days - I remember giving away two Nikon F cameras and 5 lenses before the “discovery” of DSLR and video making! Then you need to consider whether you need a field monitor - another expensive item - but I’m afraid older eyesight (like mine) does find focussing difficult.

Then you will need to make sure you have suitable editing software - not all will cope with DSLRs. (Adobe Premiere CS6 certainly does)

Eileen: “So these cameras are being used by the industry professionals?”

Eric: “Most certainly! Films that have some footage (not the whole film!) using DSLRs are Black Swan, Captain America, Iron Man 2, Red Tails (all used the 5D Mk II). The season finale of the medical drama series House was entirely shot on the 5D Mark II. Some independent films have been shot entirely using DSLRs.

I’m not an expert, but do have a look at Philip Bloom’s website and look at his time-lapse photography too - www.philipbloom.net

Eileen: “Do you see a good take up by amateur/independent film makers?”

Eric: “Independent film makers definitely! According to “The DSLR Cinematography Guide”, the “movie mode” in the DSLR is “...nothing short of a revolutionary, democratizing, disruptive moviemaking technology, as important as the invention of colour film, 16mm, or HDTV”.

What it has done is to give the ability to shoot “cinema quality”, if not for everyone, at least to “low budget” film makers. It’s the difference of investing a couple of thousand instead of forty thousand pounds.

Amateurs? Yes, but only the really dedicated because of some of the drawbacks.

Eileen: “What are the drawbacks? My experience of seeing a DSLR in action is limited, but the inflexibility of movement seemed big to me. Also the weight and size of the lens meant I could not operate easily and it seemed more suitable to the specialist”.

Eric: “I think you’ve said it all there. The camera shape is traditional and so feels right for stills shooting but the balance is wrong for video shooting.

And yes, some of these cameras are heavy and so are the quality lenses.

I wouldn’t want to give the impression that you can go out and buy one of these cameras and have the best of both worlds. Frankly you are not going to be shooting both at once.

Accurate focussing can prove a problem, and forget about auto-focus. Certainly on the 5D Mk II the auto-focus automatically cuts out the moment you switch to video! For this reason the professionals use grip equipment and attach a large focus ring, and employ a separate focus-puller.

There are all sorts of other drawbacks - including the sound quality not being all that great - some cameras have automatic gain and we should all know what that sounds like!

I’m not presenting myself as an expert on this at all. If you are interested in taking this further, I recommend having a look at “The DSLR Cinematography Guide” at <http://nofilmschool.com/dslr>. It is an entirely free on-line (or downloadable) eBook and sets out all the pros and cons at length and far better than I can.

BIAFF 2014—Come and Support our Event



Park Inn by Radisson, Bedford

From Friday April 11th—Sunday April 13th, our North Thames Region is hosting the British International Amateur Film Festival (BIAFF), probably one of the most prestigious amateur film festivals in the world, at the Park Inn by Radisson, 2 St. Mary's Street, Bedford, MK42 0AR (see www.parkinn.co.uk/hotel-bedford for hotel details). Our North Thames Region receives no regular income from the national IAC, so relies on some profit from hosting national events to replenish its coffers. So this is your chance to help to keep our Region

solvent, and also see some of the best amateur films being produced not only in the UK, but from around the world.

What are your options?

Well, you come just come for the day on Saturday. From 9.30 am until around 5.30 pm, there will be four mini-cinemas each showing four 75 minute programmes of films. These will be movies in the three, four or five star categories, many of them within the scope and capabilities of any decent lone or club film maker. They can be a source of ideas and inspiration for you going forward, and give you clear indications as to standards attainable.

It would cost you just £11 for the day, with lunch extra—there are ample eateries just a stone's throw from the hotel.

Or you could come just for Sunday, for the Award Winners Show, starting again at 9.30 am, and ending around 6 pm. Here you'll see predominantly five-star films and the Diamond Award Winners including the Daily Mail Film of the Year. Some of these may be made by large groups of filmmakers and perhaps out of the reach of the lone worker or small club producer, but nevertheless a possible source of inspiration and offering lessons in top-class amateur film-making, particularly for those of us who cannot understand why perhaps our films only get one or two stars.

Sunday's Show would also cost £11 (or £20 for Saturday & Sunday combined), with the opportunity of a hotel Sunday Lunch at £16 extra.

You could, of course, come for the whole weekend, including the Award Winning Audio-Visual Show on Friday evening including two nights full board with the Festival Gala Dinner on Saturday evening. That would cost £180 (£190 for singles), excluding the Sunday lunch.

For further information and in order to book, please contact :

Jack Gill FACI,
28 Princes Avenue,
Woodford Green,
Essex, IG8 0LN
jaclorgill@tiscali.co.uk
Tel.: 020 8505 8785

If you've never been to BIAFF before, why not make your local one a first?

Deadline for the next issue is Sunday April 6th

Please send all contributions by e-mail to:

john.astin1@ntlworld.com