

North Thames Region



The Film & Video Institute

www.theiac.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

November—December 2016



Autumn beckons . . . in more ways than one?

But PLEASE find time to enter our On-Line Competition (see p. 12)

NTRIAC CONTACTS:

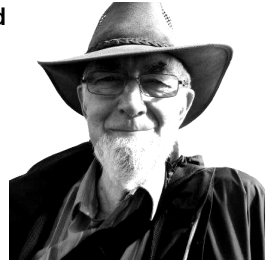
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Chairman's Chat

John Howden joined Colchester Film Makers in 2004 and took over as Chairman in 2005. He has served as Competitions Officer and is currently one of the Club's projectionists. He joined the NTR Council in 2012 and now also serves on the National IAC Council. He has judged at local, regional and national level and was a Final Round Judge at BIAFF 2015. He is an active film maker, regularly receiving 3 and 4 Star Awards at BIAFF.



By the time you read this I will no longer be your Chairman, the AGM will have taken place and the new regime will have started. We will have entertained the IAC in Norwich and we shall be looking forward to entering our films in BIAFF 2017.

At the time of writing I have nobody clamouring at my door to become Chairman, so I remain curious about who will step up to the plate when we do meet later in October. So what to write? Not easy but still important.

PLEASE can I urge you to enter our new and experimental On-Line Competition.

It is all being done on line and will be judged by folk all over the world. It is new and exciting and is setting a trend that is being watched with interest by others in the IAC. All the details you need to enter have been published in the last Newsletter and there is more on page 12.

If you upload to YouTube or Vimeo already, it is simple enough. If you are new to this, give it a go: it really is quite simple and Vimeo gives you very clear instructions to help you through the process of encoding your movie in the right format for Vimeo. AND, as Alan Colegrave said in the last Newsletter, if you are in serious trouble, ask your children or grandchildren – they will sort you out!

Good luck for your entries. I shall be joining you.

The other day I fired up my laptop and opened a Word document for printing. The printer is connected wirelessly and was duly switched on. I pressed 'Print' and sat back. The computer sat and looked at me. After a while it came up with the message, 'Printer error'. I tried going into the printer settings, the settings for the output, and switching the computer off and back on. I even tried switching the printer off and on. All to no avail! So, I thought, what now? I picked up the phone and called my man who is my guru in these matters and put the problem to him. "Well," he said "I don't guarantee that it will do anything but, switch off the printer, take out the power lead, hit the power button two or three times, leave the machine for about 5 minutes and then plug the power back in and switch it on again. If it doesn't work give me a call back!" So I did all that and low and behold it did the trick. I am successfully printing from my laptop once again and it only cost me the price of a phone call.

The reason? Well, it is to do with the memory chips in the printer. They get their knickers in a twist and by switching the power off and clearing the power memory, you make the machine re-boot its settings when it is turned back on. Give it a go – you just never know! It also works with routers.

Have fun with your filming and film making. I shall look forward to competing with you in future film events and meeting up from time to time at IAC gatherings.

Your now ex-Chairman,
John Howden LACI

The Future for our Hobby ?

A few words from your editor:

Deadlines for the printers and for Garth Hope, who edits "Film & Video Maker", mean that as editor I have to put this Newsletter "to bed" and send it for printing in the first week in October.

This, of course, is before the IAC Norwich Weekend, and our NTRIAC AGM.

At the time of writing, the NTR Council President, Chairman, KO Competition Officer and 100 Club Manager have all said they will not be standing for re-election at the AGM.

Although at this time the Council is confident that the President & KO Competition Officer will be replaced at the AGM, there is less certainty about the Chairman or the 100 Club Manager.

By the time you read this, of course, the AGM will have taken place, and you will know whether there are still posts unfilled. Full details of your new Council will be published in the Jan./Feb. 2017 Newsletter.

It goes without saying, though, that whatever happens at the AGM, the Council is only just tottering on, and is in dire need of some fresh, preferably younger blood. New members can be co-opted on at any time, so if anyone out there would like to help the Region to survive, please get in touch.

But that begs the question:

"Do we still need a North Thames IAC Region?"

John Howden, our outgoing Chairman, said in the previous Newsletter that the "IAC is either generally irrelevant or is failing in getting its message across".

Is he right?

I've been editing this Newsletter for nearly five years, and I fear he may be.

In all that time I could count on the fingers of one hand the number of members who have responded to printed articles or who have contributed their own items voluntarily, i.e. without my requesting them to.

When I took over the Newsletter in early 2012, I envisaged it as a platform where members could promote their clubs, share ideas, discuss new equipment, learn from each other and put forward suggestions to help the Council move forward.

Sadly, you obviously did not want this. As John Howden also wrote: "Getting a response [from NTRIAC members] is like wading in treacle".

This Newsletter survives almost entirely on contributions from Council members and from me.

How long can it go on like this?

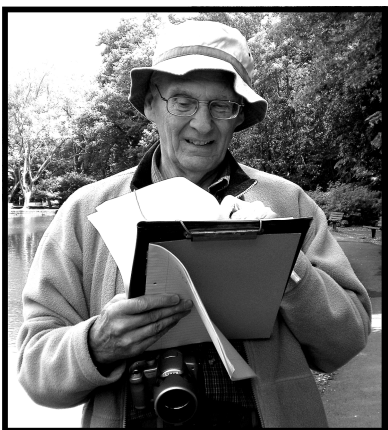
Perhaps therefore the Newsletter should shrink to just a two-page News Sheet, containing little more than dates of events and results of competitions.

It would not be worth having paper copies of these – they could easily be posted on the North Thames section of the IAC website.

A lot of time, effort and money would be saved.

And would anybody care?

John Astin FACI, Editor



John B. Parkes

1932—2016

Potters Bar FilmMakers are coming to terms with the loss of their long-serving stalwart, John Parkes, who passed away in August after a long illness.

Anyone who visited PBFM on a Club Night will remember JP, the cheery projectionist who always ensured the videos looked and sounded great on the screen.

John was a doer not a talker—the most reliable and hard-working of men, the very fulcrum of the video club.

He was enrolled as a member of Potters Bar Cine Society, as it was then, on August 30th 1986, just about thirty years ago.

Before long, he became the Competitions Officer, and, when the job was split into Internal & External Competition Officers, he took on the Internal job.

He didn't just take it on – he took possession of it. He set up the equipment, brought together the tapes or DVDs that had been entered, handed out the mark sheets, read out the titles of the entries, projected the films, spent the whole of the coffee break adding up the marks, read out the winners' names and presented the trophies which he personally had labelled.

And then the Film of the Year Competition – you wouldn't credit all the work he did for that – even putting the winners' names into individual gold envelopes to be read out, in Oscars style, on Presentation Night!

As for the Club's annual Public Show, he collated all the films to be shown on to one DVD, and not only took care of the projection, but had already booked the hall, supplied the blackout, erected the screen and adorned it with flowers & lights!

It was in January 2000 that he and John Astin ("The Two Johns") embarked on their video shows for local community groups. Since then, they've done around 150 shows over 16 years, and raised around £3,000 for the club coffers.

Nothing ever went seriously wrong – John was always so careful, so willing, so thorough; he always had a spare, he could always devise a way to overcome a minor problem.

The lynch-pin of the club, patient to a fault with everyone, always reluctant to hurt other people's feelings, John was a fantastic club member – the very best - and he will be very, very sorely missed by everyone at Potters Bar FilmMakers.

Those of you who were at Round D of this year's Knockout Competition may recall a movie from Wanstead and Woodford Movie Makers called "Bodkin's Lot".

Using pictures on a wall in a stately home, the maker, Terry Church, had animated the faces of club members into the portraits to make a story.

Terry tells us about the programme he used—"Crazy Talk".

"The movie was made using "CrazyTalk", a semi automatic animation programme that's supposed to take a lot of the hard work out of achieving face control and lip sync. The Pro version also gives 2D or 3D body control.

After taking a head shot of most club members, I set about trying to create my first movie.

The Good: On the surface, CrazyTalk looks brilliant and with a few simple tweaks can give a shallow 3 dimensional movement to the head, full facial expressions, eye movement and a choice of teeth to be proud of.

You can apply recorded speech and then attach some ready programmed bodies of which you can buy many more for a small fortune, or, of course, make your own.

The Bad: Lip Synchronisation to a section of recorded speech is dreadful. Although you can adjust each word's expression and sync, it takes forever. The automatic bodies sort of work, but not very well and when you make your own (also taking forever)! the control over them is haphazard at best.

The Ugly: While making Bodkin's Lot, (you'll notice it's Heads only Animation) the most expressive feature, the Eye Movement, crashes the program, losing hours of work! This happened a lot and I was saving the files after every small change. With the help of the CrazyTalk people, I upgraded, reloaded, added patches, and started from scratch on many sections, but it merrily crashed whenever I blinked the eyes. Although I finally found that if you leave the eyes till last, it didn't crash so much!!

Conclusion: "Crazy Talk" is very difficult to control and takes the patience of a saint to use, but it does work very well on inanimate objects e.g. oranges, melons, boxes, bottles, etc.

Strange isn't it, that an animation programme can animate inanimate objects but struggles with animated people. Ho Hum... Maybe it's just me!

By the way, they have brought out a new version "CrazyTalk 8", head and shoulders only, making 2D photos into much better 3D images with many more features.

But you might be Crazy to buy it!"

Many thanks, Terry. I certainly enjoyed the film. I notice that on-line the Standard Version sells for \$49, the Pro Version for \$149 and the Pipeline Version for \$199. Free downloads, though, do seem to be available.

Google "Crazy Talk" for more information and demo videos etc.



Ron & Marie Jones

President and KO Competition Officer Ron Jones FACI, has stood down from the NTRIAC Council after at least thirty-two years of service to the North Thames Region of the IAC.

Well into his 90s and nearly fully recovered from an operation for a new knee, Ron has decided to bring down the curtain on his NTRIAC work, though he is remaining an active member of Potters Bar FM, for whom he is continuing to serve both as External Competitions Officer and Newsletter Editor.

Ron took over from Jim Tumbridge as the Region's Annual Competition Officer in 1984.

The Annual Competition at the time was The Triangle, a unique format that really needed the participation of 27 clubs to function fully.

As we consider the future of our hobby, it's interesting to look at the Draw Sheet for the 1984/85 Competition (*see opposite*).

No computers, of course – everything done on a typewriter.

But look at how many clubs entered – 25!!

And it's sad to note how many of those Clubs are no longer with us today.

But Ron's work didn't finish with the Draw.

For the Semi-Finals and the Final, he had to book Judges, a time-consuming task.

Accompanied by his lovely, supportive wife, Marie, Ron would travel mainly miles – often in wintry weather – to attend every competition in every Round, acting as Referee, keeping the Judges up to scratch with the sometimes confusing marking system, and generally ensuring all went smoothly.

Marie reckons they got to know almost every member of every Club in the Region! In recent years, of course, the Competition has changed name & format, first to the 4x4 Competition and currently the KO Competition.

25 Clubs participated in 1984/5 - just 11 in 2015/16.

But just consider how far Ron & Marie travelled and the number of friends they made over all those years.

The Region owes so much to the couple, and quite rightly, Ron was made President in 2011.

W -NORTH THAMES I.A.C.- W

-TRIANGLE TROPHY COMPETITION-

At the Council Meeting on October 17th 1984 the draw was made for the 1984/85 Triangle Competition. The Triangles formed of the clubs who said they would take part or who hoped to take part are:-

-TRIANGLE A-

WALTHAMSTOW
WANSTEAD
EPPING ✓✓

-TRIANGLE B-

LOWESTOFT
NORWICH ✓
WEST NORFOLK ✓✓

-TRIANGLE C-

TRIANGLE
MILTON KEYNES

-TRIANGLE D-

PINNER
WESTCLIFF ✓
CHELSEA ✓✓

-TRIANGLE E-

PLANET ✓
HORNSEY ✓
ENFIELD

-TRIANGLE F-

AYLESBURY
HARLOW
FINCHLEY ✓✓

-TRIANGLE G-

POTTERS BAR
ST. ALBANS
LUTON

-TRIANGLE H-

WATFORD ✓
EDGWARE ✓
EALING

-TRIANGLE J-

PHOENIX ✓✓
WOOD GREEN
HORNCHURCH

For the record, in "Triangle C", yes, Triangle was a Club, and Aylesbury was moved into "C" from "F" to ensure a proper Competition.

The Final took place in Norwich, between Norwich CC, Planet FS and Potters Bar CS. The Set Theme was "Revenge is Sweet" and Norwich won!

I.A.C NORTH THAMES REGION TRIANGLE TROPHY FINAL 1985.

JUDGE. No 3 DAVID CLEVELAND

And look who one of the Final Judges was in 1985—David Cleveland, BBC man, founder of the East Anglian Archive, and our booked Guest Speaker at the 2016 Norwich AGM Weekend!

Club Directory

The Region now has just 19 Clubs who want to appear in this list

ACORN FILMS, CHINGFORD

Contact: David Piggott

Tel.: 020 8524 9642

AYLESBURY CAMCORDER ENTHUSIASTS

www.the-ace.org *Contact:* Alan Bowles,
50 Queens Mead, Bedgrove, Aylesbury,
Bucks., HP21 7AP

BOURNE END VIDEO MAKERS

www.bevm.co.uk *Contact:* David Jarman,
Secretary, 4 Lowlands Crescent, Great
Kingshill, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP15
6EG.

Email: enquiries@bevm.co.uk

BRENTWOOD VIDEO CLUB

Contact: Betty O'Neill, Secretary, 28 Leafy
Way, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex CM13 2QW

CHANNEL 7 PRODUCTIONS

Contact: Darren Lalonde 01480 405615 or
07887 932498

E-Mail: Darren@channel7.org.uk.

COLCHESTER FILM MAKERS CLUB

www.Cfmclub.org.uk

Contact: Lionel Bloomfield, Secretary.

Tel.: 07914 800022

Email: secretary@cfmclub.org.uk

ENFIELD VIDEO MAKERS

www.enfieldvideomakers.co.uk

Contact: Eric Jukes

Tel.: 0208 366 6162

THE ESSEX AUDIO-VISUAL GROUP

www.essexavgroup.org.uk

Contact: Mr. R. Williams

el.: 01708 748580

FINCHLEY FILM MAKERS

www.finchleycinevideo.co.uk

Contact: Alan Douglas, 1 Nethercourt
Avenue, Finchley, N3 1PS.

Tel.: 020 8349 3623 or 07715 171 446

Email: aljendouglas@btinternet.com

HARROW FILM MAKERS

www.harrowcinevideo.org.uk

Contact: Geoff Foord

Tel.: 020 8868 4021

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD MOVIE MAKERS

www.hemelhempsteadmoviemakers.org.

Contact: Mary Harris

Tel.: 01442 256393

POTTERS BAR FILMMAKERS

www.pottersbarfilmmakers.co.uk

Contact: Penny Love

Tel.: 01707 656446

RADLEY VIDEO

www.radleyvideo.co.uk

Contact: Radley College, Abingdon, Oxon.,
OX14 2HR

SOUTH ESSEX FILM MAKERS

www.sefm.org.uk

Contact: Stewart Cope

Tel.: 07740 366937

ST. ALBANS MOVIE MAKERS

www.stalbansmm.weebly.com.

Contact: Mike Cobert

Tel.: 01727 853819

STAINES VIDEO MAKERS

www.stainesvideo.co.uk

Contact: Helen Mills

Tel.: 01932 845616

WALTHAMSTOW AMATEUR CINE VIDEO CLUB

www.wacvc.org.uk

Contact: Roy Garner

Tel.: 01992 577568

WANSTEAD AND WOODFORD MOVIE MAKERS

www.wansteadcinevideo.org.uk

Contact: Martin Page

Tel.: 020 8508 6312

WOODSTOCK VIDEO CLUB

www.woodstockvideoclub.co.uk

Contact: Brian Battrick

Tel.: 01993 812891

SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE



FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4th
Wanstead & Woodford MM Public Show,
St. Pauls Church, Chigwell Road, Woodford
Bridge, IG8 8BT.
£6 inc. refreshments. 7.30 for 8 pm start.



To our new members:

Janet Cato - Bucks.
Robin Harvey - Beds.

To join the IAC , contact:
IAC, The Film and Video Institute,
McCracken Park,
Great North Road,
Gosforth,
NEWCASTLE ON TYNE NE3 2DT
Tel.: 0191 303 8960
E-Mail: admin@theiac.org.uk

NTR 100 CLUB

Contact: John Farrer

Tel.: 01462 434948

E-Mail: jffarrer@madasafish.com .

Each of the following wins £12:

September 2016

33 Ken Martin
Enfield VM

40 F. Dwyer
—

1 Ted Bateman
St. Albans MM

October 2016

103 Nicholas Gale
Harrow FM

86 Marie Jones
Potters Bar FM

71 Heather Palmer
PBFM

The Future for our Hobby ?



Eric Jukes, NTRIAC Youth, Training & Publicity Officer, casts his eyes across the amateur video & club scene:

Attracting New Club Members

At the recent Council Meeting of the NTRIAC, Officers' Reports were being gone through. "Youth Officer....." said the Chairman, followed by a silence.

Then I realised that the Council members were all looking at me!

Embarrassingly, I had completely forgotten that I had volunteered for and been appointed to the post at some long ago meeting.

And the truth was I had done absolutely nothing. As happens as one gets older, I'd forgotten all about it!

However, with some relief, I have to report that the post is being quietly forgotten and buried at the Norwich AGM.

The truth of the matter (as all video club members know) is that it is hard enough getting any new members at all, let alone "youth".

The cry is forever "we want young blood!", but, in truth, most clubs are grateful if they manage to enrol a couple of sprightly seventy year olds, who will often seem like the arrival of babes in arms compared with the rest of the membership!!

The truth is that we need to concentrate on the 50-Plus age group, and I have said for some time that we are likely to be able to attract new members through the "nostalgia market".

Show films of yesteryear - as Potters Bar FM did in their "Festival of Films" Show recently. Encourage the making of films which use old photographs, mementos, etc. At Enfield I have bought the "web name" of "We are History" (which some find to be somewhat depressing).

It is true, however, that these days, thanks to video, film and the photographic medium generally, history can be presented visually.

You don't need amazing stories of heroism in the face of battle. Many of the most mundane reminiscences can prove exciting and amazing living history to a young (or even youngish) audience. An older audience will appreciate it too, and some of them may wish to join your club.

We had a go with this at Enfield VM.

It was just a pilot scheme: "Tell us about your schooldays" we said, and pointed a camera at members. They were asked to bring along a photograph of themselves taken roughly at the time they were talking about.

We had memories of the air raid siren going in the middle of a school lesson and the children all going into the school air raid shelter. There were recollections of a Dublin childhood and the funeral of shot down German airmen (who had strayed into neutral Eire, thinking it was Belfast) complete with the swastika-draped coffins

ready to be returned to Germany.

When one thinks one is going for the local mundane story, it is surprising to receive such a graphic account seen from the eyes of a (then) small child.

Publicity

I'm also the NTRIAC Publicity Officer. I may not have achieved a lot with this, but I would suggest that if you try the "nostalgia route" I've just mentioned and run an evening where you invite members of the public to come and be filmed with their photo and reminiscences, you might just pick up a member or two - even if they are just sprightly 70 year olds.

And don't forget to run an evening where you invite them and a wider local audience back to see the results!

The Need for Training?

Unlike the post of Youth Officer, my other post, as NTRIAC Training Officer, is to continue, but my own view is that this is almost entirely redundant as well!

The "model" of the old cine club (or most other clubs for that matter), whereby the novice enters the club to receive the wisdom and experience of the older members, is long gone.

The most likely way for younger people to gain knowledge is through YouTube tutorials and similar.

It is pointless, for the most part, putting on a special evening to teach a particular technique - some will know it, some will be bored by it, and the rest won't know what you are talking about.

Using Stills In Your Videos

That is not to say that there aren't a few areas that I have noticed in which some instruction ought to be given.

I think one of the biggest fallings in amateur videos is the often abysmal quality of stills used in a film. (For a TV series demonstrating how powerful stills can be if used properly, look no further than Ken Burns' "The Civil War" 1990 mini-series from the US). The main issue is a lack of understanding of resolution so that the images are "over-blown" and pixellated and are an eye-sore.

If you are grabbing images from Google, then do remember, having clicked on "Images", click on "Search Tools" and select a large size.

I also get the impression that little or no further work is done to enhance the image which will appear on the screen.

Photoshop or similar can work wonders.

I have even "extended" a historic photograph to make it fit the screen format. So this is not simply "stretching" and losing proportion but, in one example, adding a few extra houses in a street by "cloning".

The New for 2016 Video On-Line Competition

Following the three-page spread in the previous Newsletter,
Alan Colegrave updates us on the new Competition:

- We now have a website up and running :
<http://www.adhocvideos.co.uk/ntriac>
- Just get on the website, go to "SUBMIT" and fill out the details.
- If your film is already on YouTube or Vimeo, all you'll need is the URL and, if appropriate, your IAC Membership Number.
- If your film is not already on the internet, then send it to NTRIAC@gmx.co.uk. Use "WeTransfer" (www.wetransfer.com).
- The maximum file size is 500MB. The preferred format is H264, MP4 at a resolution of 1280 by 720p.
- Payment is via PayPal, but you do NOT need a Paypal account. For a less than 3 minute film the entry fee is just £1 – can't be bad can it?
- **The Closing Date for entries is November 30th 2016.**
- Even if you do not win, you will get constructive comments from at least 3 judges, professionals or experienced in judging.
- The NTRIAC Festival Vimeo site is <https://vimeo.com/user56839430>

Just entered one of my films that was already on my own Vimeo website page. No hassle. Very simple. HAVE A GO! Ed.

Deadline for the next issue is Sunday December 4th
Please send all contributions by e-mail & attachments to:
john.astin1@ntlworld.com