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End of an Era

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Pip Critten
Writes...

Chairman's Chat & Editorial

Where do you draw the line?

I recently had the pleasure of being invited by BFVS to do a Zoom presentation on using stock assets, I had done it previously for Teign Film Makers. We looked at all manner of "stock" assets including music, templates for titles, animations, fonts and footage.

Part of the evening was looking at a tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth that was made, in the one hour I had set myself, using only stock assets. It turned out OK but, as with any film, a few further tweaks would make it better.

In the following discussion, the question was raised would it be right to enter a film competition with a film made up of just stock assets. I suggested that it would be frowned upon as it would not demonstrate the whole range of film making skills, merely the skill of editing.

Having said that, there is a skill in picking the right stock assets that follow the look and style of your film. When using graphics, for example, you want them to seem like they have all been created by the same artist in order to maintain consistency.

If your film is about or set in the 1920's you would want your fonts to have that Art Deco look otherwise it would just seem wrong. And we don't want to give the viewer any reason to be distracted from the flow and message you are trying to achieve.

Following the meeting it got me thinking (yes, unusual for me I know!)

I have a question, "just what would or would not be an acceptable ratio of own created content to stock assets?"

Firstly you would have to agree what are stock assets. One definition could be any element of the film that the maker did not totally create themselves.

Did the filmmaker actually design the title font themselves? No. Then that could be defined as a stock asset. Some other person's talent created that font even if it is free to use.

The same test would have to apply to any part of the film or soundtrack. I'm sure most of us have used music in films that we have not written and performed ourselves. After all, we are not all as clever and talented as Larry Hall, Ivan Andrews and other musician composers.

Do we create every bit of Foley in our films or do we rely on third party SFX? It doesn't matter whether you paid for it or not, it's still an asset someone else has created.

We may have used archive footage and pictures in historical creations or looking back type films.

We may give reference to, for example, The Statue of Liberty. Are we going to fly out to the USA to get three seconds of footage or use a stock film asset.

We have even reached the point with Artificial Intelligence (AI) that it is able to generate an image just by inputting a description.

I think you probably get the point I'm making by now.

So the question is "where do you draw the line?" What is acceptable and what isn't?

I said I had the question, I didn't say I had the answer.

What do you think?

Keep Smiling, Pip



The visit to JHG Jigsaws at Ashmore near Shaftesbury went very well; subsequently some members of the club have been asked to make a promotional video for them.

There will be club meetings on 9th and 23rd November 7:30pm to 9pm at The Kinson Community Centre Room 4, Pelhams Park, Millhams Rd, Kinson, Bournemouth BH10 7LH

**Preview of 'no budget' "Hardy's Regrets" feature film at
The Royal Manor Theatre, Portland
at 7:30pm 19th November, 2022**

2022 The Wessex Dramas Project, Weymouth

"Hardy's Regrets" comprises three ghost stories and a comedy. Made by local volunteers who are also making dramatic podcasts of Hardy's novels and short stories.

Hardy's Regrets' director/co-writer/cinematographer is Rose Goldthorp, a recent graduate from New Zealand who has settled in Weymouth and has said that she is "completely amazed by all the really nice people who have pitched in to help make this year's podcasts and feature film, even though I'm only shooting the latter on my iPhone!"

The very cheap tickets for this preview of "Hardy's Regrets" are for sale on

<https://www.royalmanortheatre.co.uk/>

and The Wessex Dramas project can be read about at <https://thedailydilettante.com/>

The Wessex Dramas project is run by Rose and Ann-Marie Goldthorp, of Weymouth, Dorset. They will be (generally, apart from special fund raisers like these) giving half of any monies received to charities who have kindly been helping them with this project, such as The Hardy Soc., The New Hardy Players, The Weymouth Movie Makers, The National Trust, The RMT, Portland, etc..

The other half of any tiny amount of monies received, will go towards the costs of making the films, such as future possible locations, catering, and tech gear, etc..

The Wessex Dramas project is also attempting to seek sponsors for this ongoing project which will bring Hardy novels to many more people. Rose and her assistant, Ann-Marie have just started on the adaptation of the last of the eight Thomas Hardy features which are planned for initial production.

Contact: Rose and Ann-Marie Goldthorp via

info@thedailydilettante.com

<https://bhvideoclub.com>



The rise and fall of a Great Club



How did it all start?

In the 1950's a group of photography enthusiasts formed themselves into a club which became known as the Wimborne Camera Club. Initially they met in a hired room in the Allendale House, but, as the group increased in numbers, it became necessary to find other accommodation. They became aware of part of a 1920's ex-army hut that had ended up as a hen house, and which was offered for sale. Agreement was quickly reached and the group became the proud possessors of their own property.

Thanks to the co-operation of the then Town Council a site was granted at a peppercorn rent, and Club members commenced work on re-building and completely re-furbishing the almost derelict hut. When finished, it provided convenient and comfortable accommodation for regular Club meetings, which resulted in a steady increase in membership.



In the early 1960's, a sub-group, concentrating on the then popular pastime of making films, was formed within the Club and rapidly expanded in numbers. This group became known as the Wessex Film Unit. In 1976 it became necessary for the growing Camera Club to vacate the premises, and the ciné group was offered possession of the clubhouse, together with all the assets. This was rapidly accepted, and such alterations as needed were carried out, resulting in a cinema-style auditorium with raked seating and a projection booth.

A small kitchen and toilet facilities were also included, and the group became known, rather grandly, as The Wimborne Ciné Club.

With the passing of time, and the progress of technology, the club inevitably embraced Video, and the use of film virtually ceased. Members no longer made ciné films, as modern movie-making moved to the realm of digital video, which started in the 1980's with cumbersome VHS tape cameras and slowly evolved into miniature hand-held high-definition equipment. Membership was around the 50 mark, with a waiting-list to join, and members specialising in entertainment and education at all levels of film expertise.



Left to right Our Patron 'Ozzie' Oswald Morris OBE DFC AFC BSc, film director and producer, Our President Michael Medwin OBE, actor and producer, and our long-term Chairman and film maker extraordinaire Ray Joyce

We were privileged to have the best in the industry to guide us on our way, with lots of 'hands-on' help, and plenty of advice.

Apart from regular challenges and competitions in the Club, Ray set about turning us into a Group of Film-Makers. It took 4 years, but the results were stunning. We learned about Directing, producing, writing, storyboarding, filming, lighting, set-location, set dressing, costumes, make-up. The results were epic, and we were proud that WE made the film 'Montague Jack', which won awards and accolades, including the IAC BIAFF 2011 – Best Club Film.



Michael Medwin played the part of Inspector Abberline to perfection, and also narrated the whole story.



Club members and local Amateur Dramatic Soc. members provided most of the Cast.

Continues...



The thriving Club met every Friday evening between September and May, in its own Clubhouse where we had a store of lighting and sound equipment, a huge green screen, filling the whole of one end of the building, and most importantly, members who had the ability to use it and to teach new-comers.

In 2015 it was decided to change the name of the Club to Wimborne MovieMakers, and a website was developed, to keep everyone informed about the Club's programme.

Regular Speakers kept us informed, entertained, and enthralled. Club esteem was riding on a 'high'.



So what went wrong?

Obviously we have talked about this no-end, and these are the conclusions we came to.

Firstly old age. We all got older, and sadly many passed on to a 'Higher Plane'. Many of the filming, and technical experts were among this group, leaving us with less expertise.

Secondly age-gap. As we got older, potential younger members saw us as an Old Persons Club, and were scared off. They came, looked, and didn't return.

Thirdly the new technology. It seemed that most people were quite happy to wave a smart phone camera in the air, and the last thing they wanted to know about was how to edit their shots to make a film, or even which way up to hold their phone.

Lastly (we think) Covid just did not help. People got used to not going out, and our attendances plummeted. During the Covid lock-down we started a Zoom Club, meeting as usual every Friday, and yes, this helped enormously at the time, keeping everyone entertained. But, this couldn't be a substitute for the hands on filming experience which we had been able to offer beforehand.

When we re-started our meetings, our regular attendance dropped to about 7 members, so that was the end of any Speakers. We became non-viable financially, but also as a working club.

So, that's it! After so many years of happy Film-making, we have now dis-banded. We close our doors on 30th November, and the Clubhouse will be used by a Charitable Organisation to help local people with Physical and Learning difficulties.

Terry Hopwood



What Can I Do With Bluetooth?

Rod Leyland

Tips and tricks for using Bluetooth in film making

Signal Monitoring

Many of you will monitor the sound signal from your camcorder during filming by using a pair of headphones. Doing this enables you to verify you're getting a good soundtrack.

However, you've probably also experienced a downside of using headphones.

The length of the connecting cable determines how far you can move away from the camcorder. You are in effect "tethered" and have to remove or unplug the headphones if you need to move around the set.

I have a pair of headphones which, as well as being able to be used with a cable, are also capable of receiving a Bluetooth signal from, say, a smartphone. In the past I've used them to monitor the sound signal from my camcorder by using a plug-in cable, as described above.

It occurred to me that if I plugged a Bluetooth Transmitter / Receiver (obtainable for around £10.00 from Amazon) (Fig 1) into the 3.5mm headphone output socket on my camcorder (Fig 2) and paired it with the headphones it would allow me to move freely away from the camera and not be restricted by the length of cable.

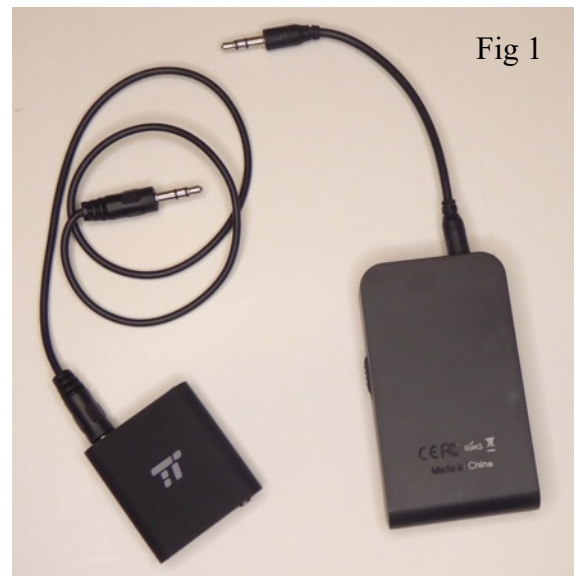


Fig 1

This worked a treat and the total freedom it gives is great.



Fig 2

There is a small amount of latency between what you hear in the headphones and the sound on the set. However, the sound and visuals recorded in the camcorder are in perfect sync and there is no latency in what you are actually recording.

The latency occurs between the signal from the Bluetooth transmitter connected to the camcorder and the received signal at the headphones. This is after the signals have been recorded in the camcorder.

In practice it isn't a big issue and it can normally be disregarded.

Spurred on by this "success", another thought struck me about where I could usefully use these Bluetooth transmitters.

Wireless Microphone

Let me describe a scenario. A useful establishing shot is one where the talent is framed in close-up and, as they speak to camera, the shot is zoomed-back to reveal how small (or possibly how precarious) their position is in relationship to their surroundings.

Trailing cables or a sound man with a boom mike aren't options in those situations!

Capturing the sound in this type of shot can be achieved in a number of ways, one being to have a portable sound recorder and microphone concealed on the talent and to match up the separately recorded soundtrack to the visuals later during editing.

Another method is to use a wireless microphone such as the ones manufactured by Rode, Sennheiser and others. These systems can be costly! I thought that I might be able to achieve an acceptable result for my purposes by using Bluetooth Transmitter / Receivers.

What I had in mind involved using a pair of the Bluetooth Transmitter / Receivers. One is used in the TX mode and the other in the RX mode. (To change the mode you move an onboard switch between TX and RX.) (Fig 3)



Fig 3



Fig 4

So, I bought a second transmitter and set one to TX and the other to RX. When you switch the units on they pair-up very easily when you press their pairing buttons. (Fig 4)

I plugged a Lavalier microphone with a 3.5mm



Fig 5

jack plug (£13.99 from WEX Photographic) into the TX transmitter (Fig 5) and I plugged the RX receiver into the 3.5mm microphone input socket on my camcorder. (Figs 6 & 7)

My theory was that the Lavalier microphone would now be transmitting to the camcorder via the wireless link between the two Bluetooth devices. Bingo!! I was receiving crisp sound from the Lavalier microphone into the camcorder, via Bluetooth.

And the big bonus was there were no trailing cables!

I've measured the range of my paired Bluetooth units to be at least 30 metres, which is more than adequate for my purposes. The range may well be greater, especially with the latest generation of Bluetooth 5.0 Transmitter / Receivers that are now available. (The ones I use are the older Bluetooth 4.0 versions.)

I mentioned earlier the effect of latency when monitoring using headphones. In this second scenario, where you are transmitting from the microphone to the camcorder, you'll note that the latency is now created before the sound and visuals are recorded in the camcorder. On playback this shows as being out-of-sync between the audio and visuals.



Fig 6



Fig 7

Don't despair, it's easily fixed. All that's required is to "slide" the soundtrack in relationship to the visuals during editing.

In my case the latency is a delay of 17 frames when shooting at 50 fps.

The latest Bluetooth 5.0 Transmitter / Receivers are described as Low Latency so the required adjustment when using such units could now be even less.

You can easily establish the latency in your own system by recording a clap of hands and checking the moment of impact to the audio peak on the soundtrack.

Of course, if you want to look really professional, you can always use a clapper-board to mark the take and you'll then have a frame accurate marker for any sound and video adjustment required.

Have fun!

Rod Leyland

rodleyland@gmail.com



Neil Mander

Zoom H8 Sound Recorder: First Impressions

Zoom H8 Sound Recorder

The writer, recently, bit the bullet and invested in a new sound recording rig. Having only recently discovered our excellent local film making club, but coming from a background interest in wild life watching, photography and sound recording, I have drifted in the direction of sound recording and mixing during joint club projects.

My original rig was built around a Sony PCM-D50 recorder; an excellent piece of electronics, but sadly, no longer in production. However, besides being a single (stereo) track device, it can only accept miniature 3.5mm co-axial inputs and microphones with built in batteries or "plug-in-power"

PDF manual and study it. In particular, it is not easy to work out how to set up the configure the individual channels. At first sight, it seems that you can only select one of the options for input sound level control – a simple limiter, a compression function for loud sounds, or a gate function to suppress background noise when recording quiet sound. I am still uncertain about this, but practical experience during a recent club project, suggests that all three can be configured and will work together. The manual could afford to be clearer.

Another cause of bafflement comes from the file structure on the SD card. Basically, the recorder treats the recording session as a project folder, and each active microphone channel is stored as a track (numbered from Tr.1, upwards), within this. It is possible to change the folder name away from the default Fyyyymmdd_nnn setting (which is sufficient for most users), using a fiddly touch screen keypad, but this is not easy in the middle of filming session. The individual track files do not appear to be editable, so it is necessary to keep a separate record of which track represents which microphone. Though I have not yet used the facility, the recorder also has the ability to be set to combine inputs to produce stereo files, within the folder.



Many enthusiasts have chosen the Zoom range of recorders as their preferred rig, and the H8 Handy Recorder appeared to be the most recent product and the logical choice to "future proof" my set up. As with some of the older products, this recorder has an interchangeable microphone capsule on the top. It is normally sold with a stereo X-Y module, with crossed microphones, but other modules can be purchased. These range from a shotgun type, through to more exotic "surround-sound" ones. In addition, there are no less than four XLR sockets and two more TRS/XLR ones, for attachment of external microphones. In my case, I have a Rode NTG-4 shotgun microphone and a pair of Rode Film Maker wireless Lavalier units.



Finally, whilst there are two audio output sockets – a line level output and a stereo headphone socket – it is only possible to monitor a composite of all the active input sources. For one of two microphones, this is just about acceptable. However, it would appear that the user would be hard pressed to differentiate between the microphones, should all six (or even eight, if the plug-in module is used) be recording together.

In order to make the H8 as attractive as possible to a wide range of users, one of the main selling points is its ability to select any one of three functionality App's. These are labelled as Field (which is the probably choice for most film makers) Music and Podcast. Depending on which is selected, the various inputs and controls are optimised for that App.

The initial impression, based on a few weeks of use, is that Zoom may have over-reached with this product. It is a well made, and relatively easy to use, device, but – as with a Swiss army knife – it is a bit of a "jack-of-all-trades, but master-of-none" design exercise.

Introductory Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmDvVIA-pKw&t=1s>

Neil Mander

Teign Film Makers Club



Though it is not difficult to get started, it quickly became apparent that I needed to download the massive



At last! A Holiday film.

Melvyn Dover

Things are on the move again, and so was I.

At last lockdown is over (till the next time?). Despite that, many people seem to have made films during that time, the results being shown and judged on Zoom. I'm surprised at the ingenuity of some of them and one consequence was that there was an increase in the number of animation films being made.

The tourism industry suffered greatly, and therefore so did the holiday film. Having been cooped up for so long apart from visits to shops, it was time to get away from it all, and I did something I hadn't done for years. I booked a holiday. As it happened the local coach company were offering one I liked the look of: A short break in Jersey.

Five days, including travel at each end. I didn't tell people early on - not wanting to tempt fate. A lot could happen between the booking and leaving date. When I did start to spread the word I stopped soon after. Nearly every one asked how I was getting there. Flying or Ferry? 'Ferry', I replied, and nearly everyone delighted in telling me how sick they'd been on their Channel crossing.

One man had rushed into a laundrette on arrival to wash shirt and tie. I learned the ferry had the nickname 'Vomit Comet'. I ask you. It didn't bode well for my first trip to the Channel Islands.

I was determined not to be put off. As it happened I enjoyed the journey both ways. We could sit where we liked, though I soon found out the young lady's lap wasn't included. I ended up at the rear of the ferry, preferring a table to myself instead of the more comfortable reclining seats with a view of the back of the seat in front. I had quick access to the bar, food, and a rear door.

Four hours the journey (what, no cinema?) so I made good use of the door to record the first part of my holiday on photograph and film. At least I could capture where I'd just been! Passing ships, seascapes, rocky outcrops, other Channel Islands ... all got snapped or filmed as they passed by. What with sandwiches and plenty of tea drinking, it was a relaxing time.



Approaching Jersey

Day Two started badly. Didn't hear the alarm, so a rush to catch the coach for a tour round the island. Breakfast, instead of being a veritable feast in the dining area, consisted of a bag of crisps and a glass of water. A local tour operator with, in our case a very verbose driver, insisted of telling us the history of the island starting at the primordial soup and going on till he'd reached the present day. And like history, repeated himself. Consequently he missed telling us about some of the

landmarks we were passing. Every so often we disembarked for a comfort break, which gave me a chance to take some more snapshots. Of the location I mean. We paraded into Jersey Pearls. I would have left sooner but I couldn't find the way out. I took pictures of war-time bunkers, filmed some of Jersey's picturesque bays, and generally tried to capture some of the atmosphere.

Back to the hotel for food and social chat with fellow diners. 'We didn't think we'd be able to come - we had Covid three weeks ago. Still got a bit of a cough.' Right. Consequently, I found out the wine waiters didn't serve Dettol. Vintage or no.

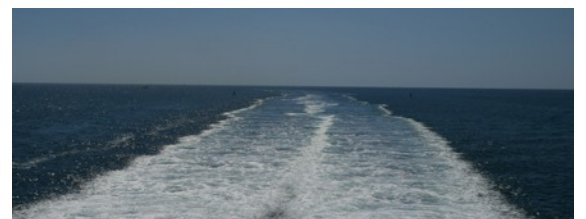


St Helier - plenty of shops

Then hooray! Two days to do my own thing. I took a stroll into St Helier. Shops like we have here, but open. And bigger. I visited a photographic shop, thinking how much cheaper I'm going to be able to buy a lens... without VAT. Nope. I did see a Panasonic bridge camera noticeably cheaper than here, but by and large prices seemed more expensive. I did buy a digital radio. VAT was 5% and the price ended up being the same as online here. It's a very rich island, a bit of a tax haven - though the rich and famous don't seem to stay there for long.

Our coach driver assured us there was no crime on the island. (Why the police, then?) Probably because everyone has so much money they don't need to steal. The yellow telephone boxes had retained directories so maybe there was something in that.

So far, not much sign of Jersey Royal potatoes or Black Butter. Condor transport 95% of everything consumed on the island, including 30,000 tonnes of Royals. Perhaps that didn't leave any for the hotel?



On the Way Home

In order to change between movie and stills quickly both were shot using the same colour space. I ended up with an album full of photographs, each one invoking a pleasant memory and admittedly, of not much interest to others. Plenty of movie footage, now loaded into my editor. I'm aiming to make two films - one the 'holiday film' which will include most of the footage apart from unusable shots, and another, short and sweet for general viewing. (Hopefully not as boring.)

Melvyn continues



Holiday Footage loaded into editor using Sequences

In the latest SoCo News (2022 07), Alan Wallbank reports a club member saying of his film, "It was a bit long". I don't know how long my holiday film will prove to be, but suspect that comment will apply to my film too. I've noticed more and more amateur fiction films online have reached a "feature length" of about 90 minutes. And very enjoyable they are too.

Now there's a funny thing. I discovered that at sea the horizon slants whereas I thought it was horizontal. Presumably it helps water skiers go from one side to the other. I did have the viewfinder spirit level switched on (though the camera has a bit of a mind of its own in that respect.) Yet I had to correct most of my seascape images to get the horizon level. *Ashampoo Photo Commander* made a quick job of that.

Happy Filming

Melvyn Dover



Since the previous issue of the SoCo magazine, TFMC members have begun the 2022/2023 season. Commencing on September 5th with a Zoom meeting, the new programme was discussed and advice given to members by Ivan Andrews, Peter Hiner and Roger Western about various aspects of film making that were relevant to the various challenges to come.

The following meeting was a face to face 'social' at Bitton House. Also in the programme was the screening of a film that both Roger Edwards (TFMC friendly cameraman) and member Roger Western were involved in. The film, made in 1996, was a show reel for a then aspiring director.

The final meeting of September was a presentation by Pip Critten about making films with people with learning difficulties. Pip used his film making skills to involve and engage his groups with the aims of improving their self confidence, life experiences and generally having fun. As with all of Pip's presentations, it gave members an insight into the lives of the various group members, including illustrating their abilities to themselves, the viewers and, in some cases, to potential employers using visual CV's.

For the meeting of Monday 3rd October, members were expecting a presentation about transitions in films from Alec Ball. But, having had one of his films awarded three stars in the recent SoCo competition, he focused on the advice given by the judges and put together a film about techniques of filming a person on the move. Alec is happy in front or behind the camera and, with the help of his wife Pat, he produced an excellent film on the subject.

The next meeting, at Bitton House, was led by Steve Moss who organised a multi camera session. Following a

short film on the subject, members filmed two short scenes with a total of six cameras positioned around the set. Thanks to Ivan Andrews and Alec Ball for being the subjects in both scenes.

All clips have been shared to the relevant members and the edited results will be shown shortly.

It was a pleasure to meet Brian Halsey (Mylor Film Makers) and his wife Mary in person. Brian regularly attended TFMC Zoom meetings during the Covid restrictions and, as they were in the area dropped in.

The latest Zoom meeting, at the time of writing, was a presentation about filming 'still life' (or static objects) by Peter Hiner. As is the norm for Peter, he produced an informative, illustrative and thought provoking slide show that included several film clips and suggestions on how to introduce movement and additional interest into a film of inanimate objects. He also challenged to members on the subject that will be viewed on Monday 7th November.

The next couple of meetings will be a presentation by Howard Smith, an award winning narrative film maker, followed by Tony and Eileen Colburn giving a talk about their latest documentary and their approach to multicam interviews using smartphones.

Details of our programme are on the [website](#).

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

Both the website and Facebook page are normally updated on a weekly basis during the season and on a casual basis during the Summer break.

Roger Western

<http://www.teignfilmmakersclub.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/tfmcadmin>



Ian Simpson

Wollongong
Camera Club Movie
Makers,
Australia

Looking at Home
Movies v Amateur
Movies

The Celebration of Home Movies

October 8th was Home Movie Day.

What's that you say? Another useless day nomination of which very few participate and even less know of its existence. It is, however, a worldwide event that was established in 2002. It is celebrated in local venues all over the world by volunteers. The Day recognises the importance of those often neglected reels of film stored away in the family homes or garages. The Day also provides an opportunity to discover and understand the personal, historical and social significance of home movies. The question still remains though, why do you bother watching other peoples' home movies?



Well firstly, we should be clear about what is meant by the term, *Home Movies*. For sure they are made by amateur movie makers, also *Home Movies* are a subset of the category *Amateur Movies*.

The Centre for Home Movies:

<https://www.centerforhomemovies.org/>

defines *Home Movies* as: "home made motion pictures created by individuals primarily for an intended audience of family members and friends within the immediate circle of the home."

Whilst the *Centre for Home Movies* defined "Amateur Movies" as: "non-professional film production that aims for a wider audience in settings such as film-making classes, film festivals, or local broadcast ..."

So, the main two differences between these two categories are why the movie was made and what was its intended audience?

Many commentators have also made the distinction between the two, as based on their production process. For example, *The Centre for Home Movies* characterises the production process of home movies as "typically casual production values (usually unedited, rarely titled), their core subject matter (immediate family, local scenes, travel),..." Whilst *Amateur Movies*, other than home movies, were regarded as having been made using the rules and practices developed and used by Hollywood and other professional production houses.

The Importance of Home Movies

The initial drive of *Home Movie Day* was to recognise the value of all those old 16 mm and 8 mm films and to get them out and view them and for some to be archived and catalogued.

For example: Australia's *National Film and Sound Archive* (NFSA) has participated in previous *Home Movie Days* and has a collection of almost 6000 home movies.

<https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/home-movies>

These include films of visits to the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games by a 16-year-old Bruce Beresford and a 15-year-old Mike Leyland. It also includes colour films of Sir Robert Menzies' World War II tours of the UK, USA and Tobruk. Sir Robert Menzies was an avid movie maker, and his colour films of the London Blitz are unique.

So, you may say, these are home movies by well-known people or are of significant historical events, such as WWII, but most peoples' home movies are boring. You may also point to the common "defects" of home movies; shot spontaneously without a plan, wide framing, long takes and often not edited, other than joining reels together. However, some commentators have seen a different side to these home movies. They have seen that home movies show participation, experimentation, and artistic freedom.

Patricia Zimmermann in, *Reel families: A social history of amateur film*, (1995) called amateur films the "voice of the people." Whilst M Hirsch in *Family frames: photography, narrative and postmemory*, (1997), went further (and here we can replace the word 'photography' by 'home movies'): "Photography quickly became the family's primary instrument of self-knowledge and representation—the means by which the family memory would be continued and perpetrated, by which the family's story would henceforth be told."

So What to Do with Our Home Movies

The last two years of restricted movement and lockdowns due to COVID-19 provided the opportunity for me to review my collection of Super 8 films, my video tapes, from Hi 8 through to MiniDV, and my HD storage of digital video files. This turned out to be a massive task but was just the beginning. The films had to be scanned and the video tapes transferred into the digital realm. Then my collection of audio tapes, both reel-to-reel and cassette, had to be digitalised.

Once all of this was completed, I had the files to either re-create the old film movies with their original soundtracks or to create new movies from the old clips. It was during this process I realised how important these old movies can be. For the family, they provide a sense of personal identity, but for strangers, they provide information about the social environment of past times.



An example of a Super 8 film digitised for modern screening is our family's initially ill-fated trip to Brisbane to visit the relatives and to visit EXPO88.

<https://vimeo.com/717173670>



Gloucester Film Makers

We held our Finals Night on 17th October when 8 winning films were projected.

Each film on a different theme which makes selecting an overall winner difficult for the judges. This year members of the Tewkesbury club undertook this task and chose Cathedral of Cloth, a film by Robert Paget as the Best Film.

Paula Clare's film Staycation won the Best Sound. Congratulations to both.

Our 60 Film Competition attracted some entries and these we shall be seeing next week and selecting the winner of the £60.00.

Our thoughts now turn to our 2023 programme which includes hosting the annual Inter Club Competition in March for The Ray Toleman Trophy.

We have agreed to do Zoom meetings in January and February.

Our Road Shows have been completed for this year and some bookings already in the diary for next.

Sadly, like many other clubs our numbers have fallen over recent years due to illness, some leaving and others having died. A total of 12, which is a lot out 20 which we had just a few years ago. However where there's life there's hope.

Looking ahead we have our AGM in November and an in house Christmas Meal in December which we look forward to.

www.gloucesterfilmmakers.org.uk

Keep on filming.

John Greene, Gloucester Film Makers



Is your club news featured here?

If not, you may well be missing a trick.

This magazine is circulated internationally!



Dave Jones

Shares his
thoughts

Back to the Future

You know when you were in the forces and flying a jet fighter, how you looked into the helmet and fixed your gaze on a target, found by radar, then spoke the words 'Acquire target', you then saw it being acquired and you would hear 'Target Locked', you then said 'Arm missile' and when within range, which was about twenty miles, you gave the command 'Fire'. You would then turn for home and at Mk 1.3, by the time your missile found its target you were forty miles away on the edge of space.

There's been a spin-off. We now have camera viewfinders that 'gaze' at your eye and auto focus on whatever you are looking at. Hopefully, they will one day incorporate that in spectacles, I have three pairs. You know what it's like when you are getting old, you walk around with your zipper undone, then the day comes when you forget to open it.

As many of us are hoarders of the past, and care little for the future, the youngsters out there know nothing of the past and always look to the future, so I thought it may be interesting to look into the world of tomorrow.

Changes

The most strident changes are with mobile phones, not only can they track your ex-wife, turn the gas on and start to cook your dinner, but they can now be plugged into the back of cameras and provide all that a professional camera can offer.

Today, out there, we have editors that do better than some of the 'Life Form' editors, the ones that live and breathe. Many editors say that they are rather worried about their own future, with artificial intelligence (AI) like this hitting the market, but in all cases of AI, you are given the opportunity to override it or add the finishing touches. Its main appeal is that of ENG (Electronic News Gathering) when time is of the essence. There is a whole army of people out there who don't even know which way up to hold their camera, let alone edit a film employing film grammar. I'm saying, fear not, for you will never be replaced per se. In order to do what a cup of tea and a nap will achieve, they will have to work for another forty years.

Here's the rub for them. When these geniuses develop and produce software that appeals to them, it won't necessarily appeal to your director, so the software has to be flexible. It is not uncommon today for films to come from a colourist, where scene after scene has a different colour cast. If we were to do that at club level, people would be asking if you know anything about colour balance. Final Cut Pro and others, offer a choice of colour casts and its just one click of a button and takes just a few seconds, so we have orange people at sunset, blue snow on a cold winter's day, green tinted roses in the summer months ... and yes, I don't like it.

Today, they (the geniuses of software) can get a low count sensor, meaning a lower number of pixels, because the sensor is really tiny and there isn't room for a bigger one, and make it do the impossible. Here's how it is done:

1 The shutter button is pressed and a picture is taken. This is stored.

2 An extremely short time later, they shift the sensor a minute amount and a second picture is taken, now with pixels recording those parts of the image where there were no pixels in the first picture. This second picture is layered over the top of the first picture.

3 The pixel count is thus effectively doubled, so a 2K sensor now produces 4K.

Difficult to believe

You may remember some time ago, when there was a demand for vinyl records, the old die-hards declaring that they were better than digital, now it has happened with cameras. The demand for old film cameras is on the increase and the sale of films is doubling and trebling. We all know that if the demand is there, there will always be a desire to provide for it. It would appear that retro anything is the latest fashion. The demand for film is going up and up.

For those manufacturers who've got it right, I would place the Lumix near the top of the list. There is an old saying, 'Buy cheap, buy twice' and that has always been the case. Their top of the range cameras are utterly superb for video.

I bought a Lumix a year or two ago and it's video performance is near to staggering, but when it comes to stabilisation, it doesn't compare with a Balanced Optic Stabilisation. (Steadyshot). Here in 2022, it may have improved, as stabilisation is a need, a requirement, rather than an option.

For many of us, there is nothing like a tripod when it comes to a steady shot, but great strides are being made, so maybe in the future, we will have a number of tiny sensors in a cluster, like the mirror segments in a modern telescope, and move their small mass to chase the image, achieving in large cameras, what is possible in smaller cameras like GoPro and iPhones.

Just recently, a cinema film was made with an iPhone camera and distributed. There were parts of it that were with picture noise in low illumination, but in the main, the quality of the shots in bright sunshine were quite acceptable. It was a first, but I don't think it will be the last. It would appear that the handling of an iPhone has rather spoilt us. How convenient when compared with carrying around large bags, and in my case, a suitcase on wheels. Old habits are hard to break. You see, I don't possess an iPhone or anything like it. Why? Believe it or not, I don't need one. I needed a mobility scooter though.

Here it is.



My bike with the front wheel bigger than the back wheel

Dave, Isle of Wight



Modern Day Museum Piece



shooting, ours is less structured, but still offers instructions as how to construct the film. Because our film is based on a 3 hour event it must still follow a sequential set of scenes.

Leaving the baking analogy for a few minutes the editing software I used is an old copy of Magix, which is on an even older Windows XP computer. The reason I was so meticulous about putting all my eggs in one basket (sorry, files in one folder) is that the Magimix (sorry Magix) throws a wobbly if it needs to change folders or directories during rendering. This is why I always save my work regularly.

Luckily none of our files were shot in 4K, as this would be a problem for my old software. Using any software can throw up problems, you cannot always solve the problem but you can sometimes work round it. One such case was when running the audio from one camera on the timeline beneath a different camera's video an audible growl was heard alongside the normal sound. I discovered that both cameras used different Codecs so surmised this was the problem. It made no difference because unless I found an answer the footage would be scrapped. Magix does have its own file type when enables you to save the video separately from the audio, by making a video only file and dropping it back on the timeline in place of the original video solved the problem.



I say less arduous but nevertheless a daunting proposition. Right from the start it pays to be aware of the task ahead and to ensure that every step you take is a positive one.

Like baking a cake you will need to gather your ingredients. Ours was five memory cards of footage from the video cameras and drone. Plus any documents, programmes, etc. that hold details of names of the people needed for subtitles and credits. The next process is to store them until we are ready to start baking. Just as we would keep our ingredients in a cupboard or refrigerator we will use a folder on our computer to keep everything in. It may seem odd to keep everything in one place, something we are told not to do with our valuables, but as we will find out later there's a purpose to this strategy.



Our memory cards, all from different cameras, contained a total of over 50Gbs of footage. And each file was copied into our mixing bowl (folder). Care being taken to ensure every clip has a different filename, different cameras, especially if they are the same brand, can use the same filename. Take note of which files are from which cameras, this is essential when the mixing starts.

Our finished film will be a documentary and so we need a recipe to match. Whereas the recipe of a scripted film would have outlined the shots required prior to the



Before any film clips were put on the timeline a note was made of what each clip contained, this was vital when you are using clips from two or three cameras which have filmed the same event. Or you need a crowd scene, etc., to fill in between cuts. With the footage being filmed on the hoof there is always the delicate task of deciding what is acceptable and what isn't. Throwing a wobbly frame into the film could spoil everything, a recipe for disaster.

Back to our cake. The ingredients have been mixed in the bowl. We initially used a method as if we were making rock cakes. Small mp4 files of a specific event, a song, or a speech. These were all laid on the timeline to make our final full size cake prior to baking. Our baking in the oven (or DVD burner) took quite a time but the outcome was a beautiful cake which took 40 minutes to get through. Yum, yum.

The moral of the story is to be precise and pedantic for the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It was then just a matter of sending off the master DVD off to get copies made. The icing on the cake will be to find it on sale in the Violette Szabó Museum when it opens again next year.

Will Dallimore

Chairman of Tewkesbury YMCA Movie Makers

<https://www.facebook.com/Tewkesbury-YMCA-Movie-Makers-330400474358464/>

Will Dallimore

Tewkesbury
YMCA Movie
Makers



Alan Wallbank

Shares his
thoughts

Alan's Ramblings

October has been a very productive month with two long term films completed within weeks of each other, although one gave me a lot of grief. The first one to be finalised was the one about the church mentioned in previous rambles. I just needed to film the local farmer driving his tractor in the field around the church and received a message from his daughter one morning that he would be there about 1pm that afternoon.

Not wanting to get there late, I arrived at 12 'o'clock and took the opportunity to re film some scenes after which I hung around expecting the tractor to suddenly appear, but there was no sign of anything by 1.30 pm so I returned to my car. Fortunately, I had brought a copy of the F&VM with me and I was soon engrossed in the contents, especially Ian Reeds piece on sound connections. On that point I have a few XLR surplus leads. They are free if anyone is interested. Just phone me on 07889154853.

Long wait

Just as I was reading the last page, the farmers hand passed by and said there had been a delay, because some concreting had taken preference and there was no telling when said farmer would be in the field. It was now 3pm, so my Steam Railway magazine provided extra reading material. At 4pm I was assured that my wait would soon be over, but another hour passed before the tractor finally arrived in fading light and it was another fifteen minutes before any action materialised.

The light was really not good enough, but the scene has been added to the film anyway. It really needs to be done again, but that means waiting until next Spring. So I waited five and a quarter hours for a two second scene!

My other completed film was giving very high stress levels as my Casablanca was playing up, because I had put

too many projects on the machine and it would not shut down so I had to remove the mains lead each time. It would not let me change projects either and it got to the point where I thought I was going to lose three years of work. In fact it was getting very close to crashing altogether and quite honestly I was having sleepless night worrying if I could retrieve anything at all.

With every editing action causing some sort of grief, I was very, very lucky to get the finished project onto a disc. When I clicked on 'delete project' it failed to respond and it still would not let me change projects or shut down. The last throw of the dice was to painstakingly delete every downloaded image and there were hundreds in the hope it would free up space on the hard drive. Once they had all been removed, I clicked on 'change project' again and to my utter relief it worked first time!

Most of my equipment is over twenty years old, so I have been very lucky that it has remained reliable, but the day will come when something will go wrong and replacing it will be all but impossible. In the meantime I will carry on and hope I can complete all my present films, rather than take on new ones. How many times I have I said that before!

Can you help?

Perhaps its not for So-Co News, but could someone explain how subtitles are added to films and TV programmes and why is it that when the picture is paused, the subtitle disappears? Quite often, the subtitles are spot on, but when watching my local evening news broadcast the captions lag behind the spoken word. This seems to happen every night and while it suggests that the programme is pre-recorded surely the subtitles should not be delayed? This sometimes happens with films, including missing dialogue.



It's probably a long time ago that you gave your email address to head office and some of the email addresses are no longer current. This makes it a little difficult for the committee to keep in touch and to forward out information about competitions etc.

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

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

Please send any email address amendments to:

pipcritten@googlemail.com

Many thanks for your help.



Robert Paget

Tips, advice and
chit chat.

This and That

If I were now challenged by the question about use of eyepiece and viewfinder, I would say that as camera operator you are the “witness” to what is happening. You have the ability to control what a future audience will see, and to control what you would like them to understand from the evolving story and sequence of images.

The better you carry out these functions, the more natural the experience will be for the audience, and hopefully they will “witness” the evolving visual story that you have captured and crafted. It is a controlled form of reality which you are creating, whether that is drama or a documentary.

I also try to be thinking about that when filming with a drone, where watching the screen is more important. With limited battery charge to any flight, obtaining a satisfactory image composition has to be a fairly rapid decision which you stick with, as do using controls to achieve movement. Just hovering in the air at a fixed position to film a subject does not necessarily exploit the full creative possibilities. Depending on the subject matter, you would not normally film in wide angle only and using a stable tripod which was fairly distant from the subject, without trying to break up the sequence into separate shots, usually repositioning the camera for different angles, or even attempting a pan or tilt of the camera.

I used to drive a mechanical dragline excavator fifty years ago as a canal restoration volunteer on Sundays, and once you get used to the basic three hand levers and two brake pedals, you begin to make the machine perform as you want it to, often using four of those functions at the same time. It is just practice, because four functions at the same time is normal when driving a car, and simple diagonal movements of the drone control sticks combines two directions of movement, with the camera tilt wheel adding the fifth motion.

Viewing Films

Watching amateur film competitions does hold some surprises, and knowing a little about what you are going to watch does make a difference:

The Soco Regional Film Competition had an amazing number of entries. It took me a couple of days to view and enjoy them all. Thankfully, not being a judge, I could view them in a relaxed manner. I was grateful for the Judge’s comments, and comments always give an insight into how others perceive the structure and content of your films.

I try to view whatever films that various clubs have uploaded throughout the year, so had already seen some of them. What came through to me was the enormous range of ideas and creativity. If you go to the cinema, you have already selected the film and possibly read about the Director, the principal actors and have seen a “next week in all cinemas” trailer on commercial TV. If you missed all of that, there will have been guest appearances by actors on chat show programmes and breakfast TV. Yes, it is all about money, and that is where our films differ.

You start watching an amateur film, and may be unsure whether it is a serious documentary, a theatrical drama or a comedy. Even a 1960s High Street cinema had inviting posters outside for those simply escaping from a rainstorm. Picking through forthcoming TV films or drama series and selecting the TV hard drive recorder to “record

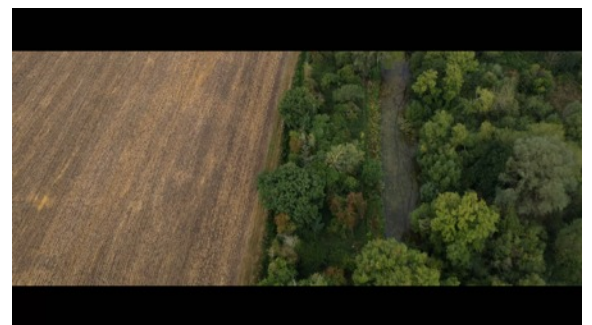
whole series”, you can usually access a brief resume of the storyline. The “Walter presents” collection of films available on the “More4” online free channel, claims to select the very best of European drama, and it is interesting to see the variations in camera, editing and script styles across Europe. I feel that audio tracks are often better on European TV drama, where excessive alteration to the clarity of delivered speech is far less prevalent. UK dramas suffering from this invariably leave Foley sound effects far too loud and clear, resulting in actors mumbling and whispering, but their boots and high-heels being at least as loud as their voices.

I notice that should you enter a competition using the online “Film Freeway” service, you can even upload a poster image along with details of crew, director, budget etc. Were you to enter your modest drama film, and find you were in the final screenings for a “Palm d’Or” at Cannes, a good poster in the entrance lobby would give the audience a taster or forewarning of what they were going to see. The Film Freeway website gives links to a vast array of current International competitions with frequent email updates of forthcoming events. The fees payable depending on category and which increase as the entry closing date approaches.

Recent Soco articles about colours produced by different cameras disclosed that what appears “correct or true” varies significantly between manufacturers. Kodak cine and transparency film colours were loved by many of us. They almost made the world look a happier place through the enhanced and limited colour palette.

I usually amend contrast and contrast centre to achieve the desired look, and rarely alter colours except to match up different cameras, but I thank Dave Jones for the **30-60-10** article and the video link has got me doing just that. I had not read or thought about that ratio for years. When filming with a drone I normally wear an old green waterproof to disguise my appearance in any shots, and I had wondered about buying a red waterproof jacket for the next time I attempt a Vlog, although I do not think I would get “planning permission at home” to buy a quality “Musto” jacket. Those have been the only ways I was likely to be able to seriously control the “look” of an image through colouration in an outside setting. I would not be painting the grass to the correct shade of green as happened in a couple of major cinema films, (Blow Up and Sound of Music), although I remember the story of schoolboys altering the colour of the disciplinarian sports master’s front lawn in Stonehouse using weed killer.

Filming a sequence entirely using a drone the day before I read Dave’s article, gave me fresh material to use the “60-30-10” idea during the experimental edit.





Robert Paget continues....

Having flown at that location before, I had a rough mental plan for the flight, and the shots and movements I wanted. Lighting conditions were changing, and I had been more concerned about my selection of ND filter before take-off to ensure motion blur of any fast moving vehicles. I captured all of the footage I needed in one twenty minute flight, including shots of a nearby mill for another project.

It would be edited to classical style music, and I wanted it to look as cinematic as possible. I decided to alter the low tones, mid tones and highlights, using increases in Green for the fields and trees, increases in Red for spoil heaps and freshly uncovered soil where an archaeological survey is starting, plus increase in highlights of Blue, which made very little difference to the appearance of a distant cloudy horizon and reflections from a small river.

Not made with any intention of competition entry material, there have been no comments about the colouration of that film, the autumnal tree colourings were excellent, and it is getting a steady flow of views on Youtube.

What do I normally film or photograph on the rare occasions when I have a new camera? It usually ends up with filming flowers and insects in the garden. A very busy Hummingbird Hawk Moth visited our garden in July, and to capture any video I had to film hand held as it darted around flowers.



Whatever the weather conditions, you can begin to get the feel of the device, the focus and zoom functions, and within minutes have the memory card in the computer, to assess your skillset, and to decide where you will need to refer to the handbook. I remember a Sony Digital8 camera was my first experience of any stabilised image.

Standing in a doorway I filmed a full moon in full telephoto while just hand holding the camera. The following evening I filmed the moon rising, and speeded it

up using the Premiere5 editing package I was using at the time. My eldest daughter's junior school teacher was very pleased with the results on VHS tape, and which she then used as a teaching resource.

I filmed the moon again with my last 1080p camera about six years ago, experimenting with manual exposure and adding a strong ND filter. That film has been very useful for several projects, and I repeated the process last year using a camera with a one-inch sensor. With the planet Jupiter at its nearest to Earth for 59 years, I recently made two attempts to film it. Certainly a very bright object in the night sky, but it proved more difficult to locate when using a tripod, and reducing exposure manually plus using ND 64 revealed no more detail of the planet, but removed the less bright moons. It was never going to be a wonderful image, but just relying on optical stabilisation, a single heavily zoomed in and cropped 4K frame was achieved, but proved I was at the limit for the camera. A far higher resolution DSLR with longer lens would have been far better, or even a phone pressed onto the eyepiece of a telescope, but it was a very cold night, so I retreated indoors.



Skilled and creative still photographer Ian Rankin (Great British Photography Challenge, BBC TV) gave some advice and thought-provoking ideas, which I consider applies equally to film makers wishing to improve their work:

Have a back-up plan.

There is no luck in photography.

Interestingly, he also stated that ".....all the best photographers stick to what they do best".

As amateurs we are not seeking financial income, or even income disguised as sponsorship. That means that we can attempt to risk styles of photography or editing that professionals may not necessarily risk.

Robert

Quick update

I'm making a One Minute movie entitled "Liz Truss, my successes as the UK Prime Minister".

I would appreciate ideas on how I can fill the other 57 seconds!

Keep Smiling
Pip



One To Watch

A few from Pip Critten

Selected
Movies
from
the
World
Wide Web

Send your
contributions to

pipcritten@googlemail.com

1 man crew v 10 man crew

<https://youtu.be/R1rTLMynA04>



5 Critical Steps To Always Buy The Right Gear

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zO9axytfk8&list=PLWbL9Hgk_9dy2IyomHFH3qQOxofRtstpM



6 Ways to Edit Any Scene

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVR8zz8ci2k>



"5 Steps To Shooting A Documentary"

<https://youtu.be/fyk7xRw3umw>



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Lee Prescott – Stonehouse

Changes

New & Rejoined:

Change of address / contact:

Resigned:

MS HILARY BRITLAND, Bristol

MR JOHN SIMPSON, Dorchester

MR ERIC BENNETT, Holybourne

MRS & MRS M J ELLIOTT, Crediton

Cancelled:

Deceased:

MR I. FISHER, Winchester

Moved into SoCo Region:

Change of Name

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at either:

[Pip's SoCo News Archive](#)

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

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