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## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I am delighted to announce that David Tate has agreed to become Vice Chairman. David and Pauline joined the club about sixteen years ago. What many of you won't know are the circumstances that led David to the club. All those years ago he was a keen still photographer. At an overnight stay on his way down to Cornwall his camera and lenses were stolen from his car. Instead of buying another still camera he decided to try a camcorder. A neighbour, Alan Wilson, encouraged him and Pauline to come to the club where Paul promptly put them into a Film in an Evening Group along with Dick and Jean Hibberd and Peter and Majorie Dickens. Apparently they had to start the film with a sentence, something like: "Hallo, can I help you, I believe you're lost." And, I believe WriteAngle was born.

Once the calendar page has been turned from August to September I always feel this is the start of the countdown to Christmas. What? I hear you say. Christmas? Get thee behind me.... However, the evenings

are gradually getting longer, although there is often still the warmth of summer in the air, but with the days drawing in this is a good opportunity to start editing your films in time for the Club

### OLD

Very quietly a friend confided to her husband on the eve of their 50th Anniversary that she was having an affair.

He turned to her and asked ... "Are you having it catered?"

And **THAT**, my friend **IS** the definition of 'OLD'

Competition. With the mention of Christmas, put Sunday 6th December in your diaries for our annual Christmas Lunch. This will be held at The Farnham House Hotel. As mentioned in a recent email, there will be a Brainstorming session at 2.30 on 9th September at Jean Hibberd's house. We need ideas for the 2010 Albany competition. The theme is "In The Hot Seat." If you want to attend either speak to Jean or email me. If you have some ideas but can't make it, then you can email the ideas to me and they will be aired during the meeting.

Paul has written a good guide on how to run a Brainstorming session. One of the things he stipulates is: any ideas at all, however outlandish they may seem, can

and must be thrown up for discussion, in the hope that they may spark off other (and possibly more practical) ideas from other members of the group. Last week we had a Brainstorming session for the "2 Days Later" film competition which was adjudicated by Paul. Eight of us attended and several interesting story lines were thrown into the pot and discussed, from haunted petrol tanks in cars, to nature taking its revenge by animals attacking people, to nasty people plotting to do away with their rich relatives. I'm hoping to have a working script ready for next week, then we have about 46 hours left, spread over this month, to make and edit the film, so if you feel you want to get involved send me an email. The "2 Days Later" competition is for a horror/suspense/chiller film, maximum ten minutes to be made within a period of 48 hours, though the hours can be spread over days or weeks.

On Tuesday 24th August, Paul arranged for the Step by Step Powerpoint presentation to be shown at the Farnham Lions Club meeting. John Devlin from Step by Step, Gordon and myself attended. We were congratulated on making a professional and interesting programme.

**Rita Wheeler**

## WOOLMER'S WISDOM: Teamwork

Its never straightforward producing a worthwhile movie, you will almost always find unexpected problems that must be solved. Assuming you have a good script to start with, no matter how detailed it has been prepared, it is never possible to follow each shot rigidly.

The main difficulty that amateur movie makers experience, is that it requires a team. So often we find the main actor is also the lighting expert. Professionals don't have this problem, but they spend vast sums of money and yet many still turn out to be flops!

So to get down to the nitty gritty: The first thing you find is that the location is not as you imagined, so this means adjusting the script to fit the location. Then there is the order in which you take the scenes, for it is rarely possible to shoot in strict order as scripted, especially if there are outside scenes as well as indoors, so this means getting the outdoor stuff done when the weather allows!

You are ready to start your first scene and the

challenge begins. The room is small and there is no space for the tripod, so this means a hand held job as the camera man wedges himself into a corner. How is it going to be lit? There may be room for one small lamp outside a doorway, or a light outside a window, provided it is not raining or it might be on the first floor and this would mean clamping it onto a high step ladder. You are just about to start "Take One", when a gust of wind dislodges the outside light.

In another scene, there is more room to work but there is a problem with the sound. There is a hum or an echo, so you change the mic and hide it in a flower pot. You finally announce "Scene Four Take One," then an actor forgets a line or bursts out laughing. Or the camera man says, "We'll have to go again, the director was in shot." So there's another and another take and so it goes on.

In the evening you sit down with a drink and assess the rushes. "The last shot in that scene was very good," someone remarks. Then comes a scene that took a long time to set up,

but an actor had forgotten a ring or someone was wearing the wrong pullover. It is very important to have a continuity person! This may seem obvious but mistakes are easily made. It is frustrating, costs time and no one is laughing! However, there are always a few laughs, I would go as far as to say there are times when laughter is necessary to relieve the tedium while a scene is being set up. So there's never a scene that is straightforward, only that some scenes are less tricky. The thing is, that with the craft of movie making, all the team should be dedicated to the end result.

You have finished shooting, the script has been followed as near as possible, so the crew go their separate ways. But it may not be long before you find that there is an important linking shot missing and there is even a shortage of Close Ups. Oh dear!

Even so that's not the end of it, the real task is always in the editing. The team has gone and we are back to the few facing the final edit decisions.

# AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

Due to the absence of Chairman Rita Wheeler on a well-earned break in France, the evening was presented by Club President Sir Paul Holden. He first had to explain that, sadly, David Longley had been forced, at the last moment, to postpone his presentation of selected films from the last Surrey Film Festival to a future occasion for urgent family reasons; and therefore, instead, Sir Paul introduced a 65-minute showreel of films made by Valley Films, a group of six film-making couples operating in Kent, and introduced by their principal Director and Editor, Geoff Friend. Following this excellent programme, Neil Cryer chaired a discussion to solicit what we might have learned from these 17 short films, which could improve our own productions.

Most Club Notices were deferred until after the refreshment break, and the always-welcome informal chats between members. In particular, **Val Hitchman** sought urgent consideration of the two articles in this month's Border Post, and further information on the website [www.2dayslater.co.uk](http://www.2dayslater.co.uk), regarding a national competition to make a 10-minute horror film involving certain specified items, with a maximum time in production of 48 hours (which can be spread over several days, of course.)



Anybody interested in taking part should contact Val, or Training Officer Fred Hawkins, urgently.

Paul also asked for volunteers to undertake a Community Film to help a man with learning difficulties and behavioural problems to see for himself how his unacceptable behaviour impacts on others. Several hands shot up, so Paul will investigate the requirement further, and prepare a budget for possible Farnham Lions Club funding. Volunteers are requested to confirm their interest to Paul directly.

The rest of the evening was devoted to showing the membership at large the recently completed PowerPoint presentation, which the Farnham Lions had sponsored SBFVM to produce for a local charity, Step by Step, which empowers single, homeless and/or unemployed young people, aged up to 25, possibly also with drug and alcohol problems, to take charge of their lives and rejoin mainstream society, giving help with accommodation, support, guidance, education and training. Whilst Social Services provides help with funding the basic accommodation of homeless people, no official funding is available to

help with the ongoing costs of counselling, which are crucial to the main objective of motivating and empowering their "clients" to return to productive citizenship. Funding is so critically short that they have had to lay off four professional staff – hence the PowerPoint presentation to seek funding from Rotary Clubs and similar potentially funding organisations within their areas of coverage (basically the Blackwater Valley Area of North Hampshire and Southwest Surrey, although clients may come from outside this area.)

Step by Step had already produced their own PowerPoint presentation for this purpose, but it consisted solely of a series of slides, with headings for their speakers to talk to. What they had requested, and what the Lions had provided sponsorship for, was for SBFVM to "beef up" this presentation with video clips of Supporters and Clients giving their own accounts of the value of Step by Step's work. Prior to showing the "beefed-up" presentation, Chief Cameraman and Editor Gordon Sutton explained to members what had been involved in this production. There was no script, but Director Rita Wheeler, Producer Paul Holden and Production Planner Val Hitchman had worked beforehand with Step by Step Community Fund-raiser Heather Turner to develop a list of questions for Heather to put to each participant, in order to get them to address the issues which Step by Step needed .....

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## YOU GET WHAT YOU SEE?

In days of yore, when I was employed as a television cameraman, we used to have a little game of 'tweaking' one another's camera controls, just before we went 'on air'. One is all set to transmit a live drama with 3 other cameras, and you look in the viewfinder, and to your horror there is no picture there, just a black screen!!!

After a while you get used to this, and turn the brightness up in the tweaked viewfinder, and there it is, your opening shot neatly framed. It was Bill on camera 2 who tweaked your viewfinder controls. You just wonder how long it will be before he notices that his pan and tilt head is locked!!

In the video world, unlike the film world, it has largely been a case of what you see in your viewfinder is what will be recorded. Of course there are many more tweaks available in post production these days to try and mitigate any recording problems, but we should always strive to have the best possible material originating in our

cameras. And we must 'see' that it is excellent in our viewfinders.

Well it is becoming increasingly difficult, and sometimes nigh on impossible to see what we are recording in our cameras, because the viewfinders are crap. The manufacturers trend is to eliminate proper viewfinders completely, and just manufacture cameras which have 'flip out' viewfinders on the side of the camera.

These flip out viewfinders have their place in camera operation, but your eye cannot scan the frame to easily assess the headroom, looking room, what else is included in the frame, its colour composition, etc. It is similar to those of us who use a digital stills camera, holding some distance in front of us whilst we take a picture. Your eye simply can't scan the picture to see that all the necessary elements of composition are correctly placed.

Of course you may argue that there are all

these automatic controls which will focus for you, adjust the exposure etc. You are of course right, and this may be OK with a stills camera, but with a moving picture, you need to see precisely what you are recording, and whether the automatics are focusing on the background to the subject, or on the subject itself. Was the exposure correct throughout the moving shot or was it just correct at its end?

High definition. How do you pull or throw focus with a crap viewfinder? It's just about impossible. There is a new professional HD camera which has just been produced, which is sold without a viewfinder. You buy the viewfinder separately to the camera body, and of course you will want the best viewfinder, which costs just £3,860.00 plus VAT!!!!

I would suggest that you keep your eye glued to the viewfinder, and make sure that what you record is what you want.

**Dick Hibberd**

# REVIEW CORNER

**DIRECTING - Film Techniques and Aesthetics by Michael Rabiger 4th Edition**

"Here is a practical, comprehensive film directing manual. It will prepare you like no other for the methods, thought processes, feelings and judgements that a director must use throughout the fascinating experience of creating a film."



That confident mission statement opens Michael Rabiger's seminal book. He certainly delivers the goods which, though primarily aimed at would-be pros, is still chockfull of invaluable advice for any enthusiast planning to make a story film.

When we create a video we are telling stories and this is what our hobby is all about. With all the technicalities of video production its easy for the emphasis to move away from the storytelling. We often pay too much attention to our equipment, technique or crew members and neglect the story. Perhaps we can obtain better attention to the storytelling if we have a better understanding of why people like stories.

From the beginning of time man has been

telling and listening to stories. Stories divert our attention from the daily routine and can temporarily transport us out of our lives and into another. A good story can show us concepts that we didn't know about others, and even ourselves. By watching a video or listening to a story, we may see new perspectives to help us to better understand those around us.

From the moment we begin to get a seed of an idea for a video we must consider how stories and humans are related. As we understand more about how humans need stories, we will become better creators of video.

We can make videos that will entertain and amuse people with lightweight stories. With more ambition film makers can make their viewers think and consider. We can make films to make viewers feel better about themselves.

In our real lives there are no beginnings and endings, just an infinite succession of events. The limited duration of a video story compared to the seemingly endless experience of real life proves some structure and closure.

So when we find ourselves getting unnecessarily bogged down with lighting, sound, pace and depth of field, remember - the story and the message we are trying to get across is what matters.

**AUGUST CLUB NIGHT *cont'd from page 2***

..... to illustrate. Because we knew that we were going to have to pick bits and pieces of sentences, perhaps from different "takes", and perhaps eliminate "um"s, "er"s, and awkward pauses (some caused by emotionally very painful recollections), we had two cameras continually running from different viewpoints and degrees of close-up, and also took cutaways of expressive hands and feet movements, etc. to help with covering jumps in the visuals whilst making cuts in the underlying soundtracks. And the interviewer's voice is never heard.

On two different occasions we filmed seven individual interviews with either Clients or Supporters, often with several "takes" of each until we were satisfied that, in one take or another, they had managed to put across the necessary views or experiences. Careful and complete transcription of these seven interviews, by Pam and Gordon Sutton (a really vital contribution to the success of the project - PH) resulted in 13 foolscap pages of transcripts, from which Step by Step representatives selected and highlighted the few sentences that gave the best message.

Gordon then edited the several hours of video down to 17 minutes, covering just the selected passages, and divided them up into smaller sequences to insert between the pre-prepared slides at the points selected by the Step by Step representatives. Creating the PowerPoint presentation on Gordon's mac-based computers presented no difficulties, but all sorts of unexpected problems arose in the conversion of the resulting files to a format which will run on everyone else's PC-based computers and laptops. The team was most grateful for willing expert assistance provided by Neil Cryer and David Jackson, which had just enabled Gordon to solve these problems, and produced the deliverable DVD which would be passed to Step by Step at the weekend.

After this, for film-makers, the premiering of the actual PowerPoint Presentation was almost an anti-climax - but an outstanding contribution to the professional quality of the final result was gratefully acknowledged to expert Lighting Director Alan Hussey, whom we have only recently welcomed into Club membership. Paul concluded the evening with his heartfelt thanks to him and all the rest of the crew, without any of whose efforts the project could not have been so satisfactorily completed.

**Paul Holden**

## MY LONDON DEBUT

The project that I took part in with the National Theatre at the end of July proved to be a very busy and exciting two weeks. It was a musical based on the book Feather Boy written by Nicki Clark who also wrote the script for the musical. The lyrics were written by the Oscar winning lyricist Don Black.

The cast included such names as **Roy Hudd** and Elizabeth



Counsell, who happened to feature recently in a Sunday night play reading at Farnham Rep Theatre at Brightwells during their summer programme.

The story starts with a class of some twenty 11 and 12 year old children whose school project is to visit an old people's home. It was a moving story of interaction between the young and the old. Guess where I came in!

On the first day, with a roomful of approximately 20 children and 20 old people, I could not imagine how the director was to get any semblance of order. All the children proved to be

amazing, especially the three leads. Not only could they sing but they could act very well too. Elizabeth Counsell played the lead with Roy Hudd as an amusing character in the old people's home. He also appeared at the Farnham Rep at the end of August as a one man show.

On the last Thursday, we were allowed 2 visitors to watch the performance. It was only on the morning of that day that our one rehearsal got through the whole show! On the final day the performance was presented to the 'bigwigs' of the National Theatre, followed by a champagne reception.

The result was a striking presentation on simple, improvised sets with a coordinated performance which was a remarkable and impressive achievement considering the very minimal opportunities for rehearsal. It had comedy, sadness, drama and suspense.

What a wonderful two weeks it was meeting new people working with professionals in the field and how thankful I am that Rita Wheeler passed on to me that email from the National Theatre.

**Josephine Jones**



**MEETINGS** are held at St Joan's Centre, 19 Tilford Road, Farnham on the 1st Friday of each month at 7.30pm for 7.45pm. Meetings close around 10.15pm

New members are very welcome, either phone 01252 717877 or turn up at the door!

St Joan's Centre is 200 yards south of Farnham station and is in the grounds of St Joan's Church. The entrance to the church is by a narrow road opposite the junction with Alfred Road, and St Joan's Centre is to the right of the church. There is ample parking.



## COMPETITIONS

You don't have to be a member to look on the IAC website:

[www.theiac.org.uk](http://www.theiac.org.uk)

Here you will find an events diary and all the competitions being held, entry forms, news and competition results.

**Sept 30th** Closing date for entry to '2 Days Later' short film competition

**October 16-18th** Guernsey Lily Festival. Oct entries close for Southern Heat TBA

**Oct 31st** '2 Days Later' screening event at the Theatre Royal, Margate.

**November** North V South Southern Heat. Date TBA.

## EVENTS

**October 30th** SOCO Region weekend at Bournemouth

## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The 2010 albania competition will be hosted by South Downs Video & Film Makers on Sunday April 25th 2010.

The venue will be the Ferring village hall, Ferring, West Sussex. Just to remind you that the theme for 2010 is "In the Hot Seat". If you require any more information, please contact the competition secretary or Fred Clarke of South Downs Video & Film Makers.

## DECEMBER COMPETITION

It isn't too early to start thinking about your club entry for the December meeting, our club competition. Any subject at all as long as it is not more than 6 minutes.

If you haven't entered before, there is a trophy for the best 'first time winner', also for the best holiday movie and the best documentary.

Technical trophies are offered for the best sound, editing, photography and creativity. Then there's the big one for

the overall winner.

The judges will pre-judge the entries, scrutinizing them at home and writing helpful comments for you to be able to improve your masterpiece the next time round. This is a good learning exercise.

So get busy now as the entries will have to be in no later than the November meeting. It always goes to the last minute!!

**Pennyj**

## CLUB DATES

- 4 Sep** Tana Fletcher and 'The Dolphin Puppeteers'
- 2 Oct** Inter Club Competition
- 6 Nov** Retrospective on John Woolmer
- 4 Dec** Club competition

## DIARY DATES

- 30 Sept** '2 Days Later' deadline
- 6 Nov** Deadline for Club Competition films
- 6 Dec** Christmas Lunch at Farnham House Hotel

## YouTube

The club would like to feature a variety of films on the SBFVM website which would be linked through YouTube. If you would be happy for your film to appear through this medium, please let Neil know. REMEMBER, this will enable us to advertise the club to a wider audience and hopefully entice more people to the club.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Name:

Telephone:

Email: