



Border Post

Journal of Surrey Border Film & Video Makers

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I am delighted to announce that Val Hitchman's film "The Trees Are Back" won the Staines competition which took place on Friday 12th March. An official ceremony is due to take place on 30th April where she will be awarded the salver. Well done Val!

The final edit of our competition entry to the Albany Competition, "Cecil's Law" has been completed by Gillian Gatland. The competition

is due to take place on Sunday 25th April at Ferring Village Hall in Sussex. This is always an interesting and well run competition

and I would urge as many of you as possible to go. I shall be there and am willing to give anyone a lift if they contact me. It is £5 on the door to enter. Arrival time: 2.00 for a 2.30 start. There is a break for a generous tea and from memory it finishes about 7.00 pm, I think. Check out: www.ferringvillage.co.uk and www.southdownsfilmclub.org.uk

The final, final session of the Hollywood Camera course was held at Mike Sanders earlier this month. Considering we started this in 2008 the fact that 7 of us finished is quite an achievement. Read his article Hollywood Camera Course from the Trainers Point of View.

Sir Paul and I have had discussions with Disability Challengers for the possibility of making a film they can show to their

DISABILITY CHALLENGERS

We have had an approach from a local charity Disability Challengers, who provide play facilities in a safe environment, with one-to-one play leaders, for children with physical or mental disabilities. They need help with a video to publicise and seek funding for their service.

On 29th March, Rita and Paul had a

corporate sponsors. The filming is likely to take place towards the end of April or during May. Neil and I have had a meeting with two members of the Hale History Project who may be interested in making two short films about Hale and some of its families.

If you are interested in getting involved with either of these films, do let Paul, Neil or myself know.

REPORT FROM BAHRAIN

Steve has resumed his film making, now in the middle east, after purchasing himself a temporary throw away camera. The camera was successful in passing it's initiation after Steve told his driver of a 4x4 to run over it while tearing up the side of a huge sand dune. Suprisingly only a few scratches were sustained but the shot was apparently "well worth it"!!

Some of you may remember that during the summer of last year a film crew built a set in part of Alice Holt Forest.

This was for the Ridley Scott film which at that time was going to be called "Nottingham", they've obviously reverted to the usual title as it is about the story of Robin Hood. "Robin Hood" is due to be released in cinemas from 14th May, so make a date in your diaries to see it at your local cinema. It is starring Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett as well as Max Von Sydow, who made his first film in 1949.

Rita Wheeler

STOP PRESS

News has just come in that The Trees are Back by Val Hitchman has been awarded 4 Stars at BIAFF

Paul Holden

HOLIDAY MOVIES

Readers of Border Post will have noticed that in the June meeting I will be talking about making holiday movies. Hopefully we will have had a little publicity campaign locally, and will have some curious camcorder owners coming along to find out how they can best utilise those camcorders to create a holiday memory that will get watched repeatedly, rather than just once and then get put away as it's all too long and boring. Learning both how to edit, and what and how to film while you are away to make the edit easier, and the result more watchable, will keep those camcorders being used, and not stuck in a box on a shelf somewhere. Many members here, including myself, joined the club precisely to learn how to make watchable family memories, and it is hoped that we might encourage some new members by having an evening dedicated to that purpose.

If any of you can supply me with some edited footage, and if possible, but not essentially, with a little anecdote about how it came to be made, problems overcome, please let me know. I do intend to include some events that are not holidays, so please think about those also.

Clips should be up to about five minutes long. Some unedited footage might also be illuminating, but only in about one minute sections, as a 'before and after' example. Contact me at the April meeting, or by email with details, and if a film gets used, it would be preferable if I could have it on mini DV tape, although I can cope with a DVD as well.

I must emphasise, this is not intended to be about competition style holiday/family movies. Our family and friends can be quite interested in learning about where we have been, and will overlook, in fact probably not even notice, the odd fault that would be picked up by a competition judge, and do not necessarily want to see a 'documentary' about the destination, just your own experiences and thoughts about the place.

Gillian Gatland

SUCCESS AT THE 37th STAINES INTER-CLUB COMPETITION

On Friday 12th March, The Holdens and Suttons attended this wonderful, long-standing Annual Competition, run by the Staines Club, who are actually in the North Thames Region, but attract entries also from clubs within the South East (SERIAC) Region, including, of course Surrey Border, who had entered Val Hitchman's *The Trees are Back*. The competition was very competently and amusingly judged by David Longley (of Heron Productions fame – a long serving competition officer of the SERIAC and Surrey Film Festivals, who has in his time reviewed over 600 competition entries alongside top-ranking judges) and David Moore (a professional audio practitioner for over 35 years, ending up as Head of Sound at Sky Television.)

A gentleman is a man who can play the accordion but doesn't.

Surrey Border's *The Trees are Back* was one of nine entries: from Harrow *The other side of Venice* (a competently made documentary, exploring Venice in the early morning and late evening, away from the tourist crowds); from South Essex *The Wind that blows the Barley* (a gentle film with nicely varied views of a mother and two children in the barley fields, set to a specially composed song); from Orpington *Consequence* (a somewhat unbelievable but thought-provoking drama story, which the judges considered not helped by the script); from Shooters Hill *When Duty Calls* (another rather unbelievable secret service plot with somewhat wooden acting and not very good sound, which the judges – to me rather unfairly – thought should have been a one minute movie!); from Bourne End *Rebellion*, (a 2-part documentary about the history of a brewery, and the process of producing real ale); from Reading *Sidewinder* (a wonderful romp about a failed air to ground missile, rescued by two boys – with excellent acting but less believable sound – to get their own back on a river speedboat driver who had been bugging them – with superb computer animated action and a most satisfactory explosion!); from Hemel Hempstead *Pargetting* (a very enjoyable documentary with a real craftsman talking about his special form of art, created in relief on concrete walls – but where the quality of the live sound caused the judges to give much practical advice); and from Wanstead and Woodford *Recycling* (an instructive film, using one old lady trying to convince another about the need for recycling, using a script which the judges criticised on the grounds that people don't talk to each other like that!)

At the end of the evening, the judges awarded 3rd place to Hemel Hempstead's *Pargetting*; 2nd place to Reading's *Sidewinder*; and the Challenge Salver to Val Hitchman's *The Trees are Back*, despite commenting constructively that “the commentary could have been a little more authoritative” – “there could have been some sound effects to join it all together” – “they

were slightly distracted confused by the use of both scratchy sepia and black and white, scratchy and sepia sequences” – one judge thought that “there were an awful lot of statistics and too many shots of graves” - but the other judge disagreed with that – but they both agreed that “it seemed to stop very suddenly after the wreaths – they weren't really prepared for that!” Nevertheless, it was a very worthy winner – and well done Val, on behalf of Surrey Border! Gordon suspected that had the judges not been sitting at the back of the hall then they would have appreciated the considerable use of subtle war time sound effects in the background.

As the winning film it will be presented again at the prestige Staines Cine & Video Society Annual Movie Show at

Laleham Village Hall, Broadway, Laleham TW18 1AT, starting at 8 pm on Friday 30th April, in front of the Mayor and other Civic Dignitaries – when the Salver will be presented again (after having “Surrey Border 2010” engraved upon it – the seventh time in the last 20 years!) Everyone welcome – BE THERE!

Paul Holden

MARCH CLUB NIGHT

SBFVM were recently given a camcorder by a local resident who admired the club's work. **Eleanor Wood**, our competition



secretary, presented this to **Thomas Adams**, one of the growing number of younger members who have recently joined the club. The younger members have already taken part in filming projects and are keeping the older members on their toes with their keenness to make films and their refreshingly different view of life.

The monthly meeting started with a screening of ‘Finding Esther’, a short film lovingly created by the Waldron Community Players who wanted to tell the true story of a local girl who mysteriously disappeared in 1927. The film was directed by a graduating film student and

starred a large number of actors from their local community.

After a good round of tea and biscuits, the club listened intently to David Jackson's talk presenting the simple improvements you can add to a film after receiving suggestions from competition judges. Many members found this talk very useful, since the club recently held a competition which left members still contemplating how to improve the previously submitted films.

The club night ended with a call for volunteers to help with two exciting local charity projects which the club has been asked to film.

Eleanor Wood

THE DEMISE OF TAPE

Facing up to the demise of tape:

For the last 10 years or so most amateur videographers have been recording onto and editing from mini DV tape. These are compact, cheap and long lived. The format enables multi stage copies to be made without perceptible loss of detail, not like the old analogue VHS system. DV uses minimum compression and is easily downloaded into a computer in real time so that editing may be employed straight away. The finished movie is then transferred back on to another tape or DVD for viewing out in the world of friends and enthusiasts. DVD is now the preferred method of viewing for most folk outside the hobby and these are easily produced after editing. Newcomers to the field are denied all this as tape camcorders are all but extinct except in the presumer market. How can we as a club be of help to any one coming to us for advice and instruction? Without a doubt there is an unavoidable degree of learning for us to do if we are to be of any help and of course our own tape cameras aren't going to last for ever. In the coming months I propose that any of us who are contemplating getting our feet wet, co-operate and exchange our experiences. I am fortunate in as much that I have been using various new formats and have struggled with the excitement and pitfalls with some degree of success. Gordon as our new training officer has indicated he is keen to arrange get togethers at various levels to see how we all cope. I will with the editors permission pass on some of my experiences in the coming months.

Things have been changing wildly in the last two years especially in the professional field. Fortunately the consumer market seems to be settling down with something called AVCHD taking the lead and is also available on some digital still cameras. Other methods are still lurking in the background but I will put those on one side for the moment. The cameras themselves are changing rapidly as manufacturers fight tooth and nail to show off their gimmicks. So what is AVCHD? It

HOLLYWOOD CAMERA COURSE

-from the Trainers viewpoint

is a highly compressed video signal that can be transmitted or recorded taking far less space on the air waves or disk. The amount of compression can vary depending on the quality required. As the title implies it is primarily intended for the up and coming high definition format though it can be used for standard definition (SD) The Sony CX6 will record an hour of fantastic quality HD onto a tiny 4GB memory stick. These are not cheap but look alike can be obtained on the web for £15. As memory sticks are used by Sony everyone else is now settling onto SDHC cards which are cheaper and more widely available. If HD is contemplated the card must be at least class 6 otherwise it will not be fast enough. It may be possible to use a lower class for SD but I have no experience as yet. The cards can be used many times over but of course the archive feature of tape is lost. If it is any comfort some professional cards cost many hundreds of pounds for way under an hours recording!

The retail trade and "Camcorder Buyer" rabbit on as to how quick it is to download the footage onto the computer which can be much less than the real time of tape. What they are very coy about is what on earth you do with it once it is there.

Many computers won't even let you view the raw clips unless they are fast enough or have the appropriate software. I have spent the last 18 months or so exploring many ways of editing and then viewing of the finished movie. I can now process AVCHD in many ways some

quick and pricey some cheap and slow. I am sure to have missed many tricks and methods, which is where the exchange of ideas will be invaluable. The current thinking amongst consumer camera makers seems to be that amateurs don't edit apart from deleting unwanted clips in the camera. I would be terrified to do this as if good clips are clicked by mistake they are gone for ever!

Choosing a modern consumer camcorder is not easy for the unsuspecting enthusiast as many important facilities are often ignored in the advert. The safest is to assume that if it is not mentioned it is not there. Eye level viewfinders are all but gone as are the sockets for microphone, headphones and linc controller. The firewire outlet which has been the backbone of video editing has been replaced with USB2. This means different editing or a translator program so that established methods can be employed. Many camcorders are also fitted with an HDMI socket for feeding a TV with great quality. Unfortunately Hollywood have made it all but impossible to connect this to a computer. It can be done at the moment with expensive professional kit.

Next month I will start on importing and using AVCHD.

Peter Matthews

Members have sat through some 6 hours of training and stopped and discussed items as they have gone along in Mike's lounge with the training course up on the 50 inch plasma TV.

The course moved from very static shots at the beginning to motion shots at the end where the actors are moving around and the different shooting methods used for both styles. The course really does point out a number of things we are not doing in the club which, should we do them, will be of considerable benefit to us all.

So what are these?

Firstly there is a much greater in depth review of the script. The writer might give some guidelines as to where the dialogue is going to take place, whether its day or night, and they might give an idea of the mood of the characters but not always, so an in-depth assessment needs making on the script.

Secondly the Director, and the staging team are going to meet to look at the script to see where the emotions are within the dialogue and where

they might place the actors relative to each other. Some up and coming actors are often used at this stage to walk and talk the scene through to see how it plays out.

The third stage is to really get some detailed planning

done with an overhead drawing of where the actors are positioned relative to each other within the space. Arrows are placed on the drawing to show in which directions the actors move and where they stop. So now we know where the actors are going to naturally be, but we may want to adjust these positions to give us flow from a camera positioning standpoint, but that is easy to do as the actor's floor mark is easily adjusted.

In this third stage we are looking to achieve several things from our camera viewpoint as below:

- minimise the number of camera positions and set ups as these all take time and often implicate on the lighting;
- create deep staging where there are things or other people in the background to give some reality and visual interest to the scene;
- parallax where depth is emphasised by the actor passing behind something like a plant adding to the perceived depth;
- handoff shots where one person's movement naturally picks up another's and the camera seems to flow onto the 2nd actor from the 1st;
- camera movement following the action - not many, just static shots to keep up visual interest;
- by moving the positions of the cameras and actors to ensure that the camera finishes in a planned position, such as an over the shoulder shot;

(g) superiority of one actor over the other - just above eyeline gives inferior, just below eyeline gives superior.

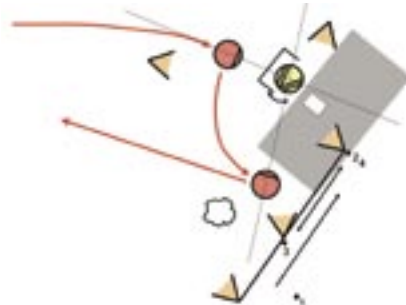
So looking at the list, the camera positioning is really looking to maximise the audience's perception of the actors' emotions. Huge amounts of messing about time on the set can be avoided by getting this planning stage really tied down before the cameras roll. A certain amount of practice is required by the actors to get used to their positions.

We certainly ought to try this planning as an exercise at the club as we will see how much extra visual value can be squeezed out of a scene. Don't be surprised if you spend several hours discussing a page and a half of script!

Much of the camerawork involved rails, dollies and jibs on the training stage, which we as a club don't have, but we can do quite a lot with a wheelchair or even a supermarket trolley. One of the things to get really into the mind is that the professional films are usually made with fixed lenses and no zooms take place, if you want to get nearer the actor then move the camera nearer. 20 mm equates to the eye and a 150-160 mm lens is often what is used giving a narrower field of vision. The one advantage of the 35 mm or 1.4 inch aperture they would use, is that only the actor in shot is in focus, all the background is out of focus. We will have a job to imitate that style, as it is not possible with smaller aperture video cameras of 0.5 to 0.66 inch, which tend to perform more like the pin hole camera, where everything is in focus.

Very useful resources are at http://www.hollywoodcamerawork.us/mc_review_dmn.html downloads tab.

However, the **blocking diagram (seen below)** only works in Adobe Illustrator; in the more commonly available Adobe Photoshop all the template items are on one layer, so each item



will need selecting and copying to make them individuals on a layer of their own. The other method is of course to print out the PDF several times and use scissors and glue in true Blue Peter fashion. If someone has the odd few hours spare it might be useful to convert this into common club members' formats to use with free programs that either come with both Mac and PC or can be downloaded.

A very useful course for us all, now let's see it put into practice... Over and Out. Happy planning!

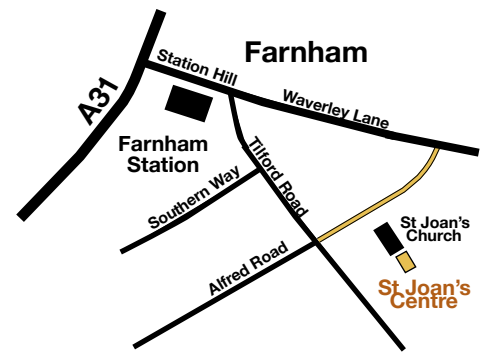
Mike Sanders



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

The Guernsey Lily International Film & Video Festival

Closing: 31 May 2010, Festival: 15-17 Oct 2010

Entries up to 30 mins in length

Wreck-Beach International Film Festival July30th-31st, Ontario, Canada

<http://www.domecountry.com/pages/wreck-beach2010.html>

Hosted at Domecountry, this free outdoor festival is small, but very popular, appealing to indie filmmakers for the past seven years. Its free submission, with mailing details on their website. The two day event features mostly short films. Preference is given to filmmakers who take their submissions to the festival.

Abertoir Horror Film Festival - Submissions Deadline 6th August 2010

<http://www.abertoir.co.uk/>

Aberystwyth Arts Centre are now accepting feature + short film submissions for consideration for this year's festival. No submission fee, but the film screener should be sent on DVD. They are looking for professionally made features and shorts (no more than 20 minutes long please) for inclusion in their lineup. Fantasy as well as horror will be considered. Please contact becky at www.abertoir.co.uk

FD4W International Film Festival - early bird deadline 30th April

<http://www.filmdirecting4women.co.uk/film-festival/>

The FD4W International Film Festival (FD4WIFF) is calling for entries from women film directors in the following four categories: Features / Shorts / Documentary Shorts / Documentary features. The Festival will take place in London from 9th-12th September. The Early Bird deadline is Friday 30th April 2010. FD4WIFF will accept film submissions from June 2005 to May 2010. See the website for details on how to submit your film www.filmdirecting4women.co.uk/film-festival

The IAC

Go to the IAC website www.theiac.org.uk to find an events diary and all the IAC competitions being held, entry forms, news and competition results. You don't have to be a member to look!

Compiled by Ellie Wood

CLUB DATES

7 May David Fairhead will be presenting an evening regarding the importance of music and film.

4 Jun Gillian Gatland will be presenting an evening of advice and tips on How to Make a Holiday Movie, the type your friends actually want to watch.

2 Jul Film in an Evening. The theme this year is 'Now and Then'.

6 Aug An evening of films from Basingstoke Film & Video Makers.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

8 Mar Committee Meeting.

8 Mar Dick Hibberd, Director of the club entry to the Albany Competition, Cecil's Law, approved the final edit. Gillian showed the film to members of the committee, as it is a club entry, for their approval. Gillian has now sent off a copy of the film for the competition.

13 Mar David and Vicky Jackson were projectionists for Fleet Arts.

15 Mar Last Hollywood Camera course session held at Mike Sanders.

17 Mar Al and Rita Wheeler were projectionists for South Warnborough Village Hall.

29 Mar Sir Paul and Rita met Russell England from Disability Challengers to discuss a possible film project.

29 Mar Neil and Rita met Geoff Wallis and Scott Bell from the Hale History Project to discuss a possible film project.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Name:

Telephone:

Email: