

Download your Border Post direct from www.surreyborder.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Spring is at last sprung. As you can see, Al and I have been busy lambing. Our flock of Jacob sheep has increased from 12 to 26 in the short period between 8th April and the 18th. All 14 lambs are doing well, although Al had to become a sheep midwife and help two of the ewes with their second lambs which were both presented badly - in both cases a tail appeared (perfect presentation is head and two front feet) and nothing else. Now it's a case of keeping an eye on them and making sure they don't get in to too much trouble.

There was a Stop Press mention in last months Border Post about Val's film "The Trees Are Back", which won 4 stars in the BIAFF festival. Four Stars is a very prestigious accolade and means: well made, technically competent, keeps our interest and/or entertains. Val also won the 37th Annual Staines Inter Club Competition in March with this film. She received the trophy on 30th April (see above right) at an award ceremony held in Staines as part of their Annual Show. The award was presented by the Mayor



of Spelthorne, Again, well done and well deserved.

I am pleased to announce our club entry to the Albany Competition which was called "Cecil's Law" won the Runner Up Trophy. Read more about it in the article "Cecil's Law".

Now that spring has at last arrived, summer is coming up quickly and before you know it, it will be Film In An Evening time. See the article "What d'you mean, your battery's flat?"

If you are around Farnham this weekend, then try out the Spring Festival at the Farnham Maltings. This must be the cheapest day's entertainment ever. For a £1 entrance fee you can enjoy all sorts of activities from 11 am until the evening is brought to a close at 10.30 with a firework display. We will be in Meeting Room 2 from 1 until 5. If you happen to be around come and say hallo. www.farnhammaltings.com

then click on Festivals, to see a copy of the programme.

Rita Wheeler

APRIL CLUB NIGHT

Members of Surrey Border Film & Video Makers enjoyed the competition entries for 30 Second Ads and 1 Minute Epics. The club runs this competition once every few years to give members the opportunity to be creative and to hone their editing skills. This year there were four entries for the 30 Second Ad and seven for the 1 Minute Epic. By an audience vote Gordon Sutton (pictured below) won the 30 Second Ad with his film, Take The Kids Out



and Alan Hussey (pictured above) won the 1 Minute Epic with his film Alarm.

During the second half of the evening long time member Mike Sanders showed his film Brazil Gravatai River Basin Project which was made to document the multi million pound water clean up project being sponsored by Rotary. Mike flew to Brazil to record the state of the river as it is today before the clean up programme, then he will return in two years and film the same part of the river which will hopefully be much cleaner.

Rita Wheeler

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

16th April - Val held a 'viewing' evening for the actors who performed in Cecil's Law. They were very impressed with the finished production and were delighted to receive their own personal DVD of the film.
On 21st April Peter, Mike & Gordon had a get together to look at the performance of the Optima EH1020 - DLP projector (impressive) and to establish the practicalities of capture and edit of AVCHD

material using Grass Valley Edius whilst drinking Mike's health over lunch on the occasion of his birthday!!

30th April - Val was presented with a Silver Salva for "The Trees Are Back" at the Staines C&VS Public Show.

1st May - Club members Pam & Gordon attended the SERIAC Film Festival held at the Oast Theatre, Tonbridge to check on the quality of the opposition!

WHAT D'YOU MEAN, YOUR BATTERY'S FLAT?

Our annual summer challenge is "Film in an Evening". Each year we use the theme for the upcoming North-v-South competition for Film in an Evening, or FIAE. This year it is "Now and Then".

Last year we had a record breaking six groups within the club taking part. Some groups are well established, like Write Angle, others will find that Training Officer, Gordon Sutton, will be trying to organize people geographically into groups.

This is your opportunity to get involved, no experience necessary, as each group has someone who knows what to do. Over the years



Film in An Evening 2007 rehearsing

we have found it is a good, and fun, idea for each group to hold their own Brainstorming session. As people throw their zany ideas in to the pot, often other better ones come out of it, and before you know it, you've got a story.

Then it's a matter of deciding on who will be cameraman, director, editor, actors. The whole point of the FIAE challenge is to focus the mind. Groups usually have two or three rehearsals. Then on the night you have two hours to film and edit the piece. This is usually where things go wrong, like a faulty tape, flat camera battery, missing actor, you're filming outdoors and it rains! Your actors voices are drowned out by unusually heavy air traffic from

Farnborough, or the kid next door has just received a go cart and is noisily trying it out the other side of the hedge, or another neighbour has chosen that night to cut the grass/use a chain saw.



Film in An Evening 2007 working hard (is that wine??)

The story has to be short. A two to three minute film, maximum. Where to film? We used to all film in and around our old club house, now we film elsewhere and travel to the club in order to premiere our films.

On the night of July 2nd the filming is meant to start at 7.00 pm and the film should be ready to be shown at the St Joans Centre by 9.15. Good luck!

Rita Wheeler

CECIL'S LAW

On Sunday 25th April Gillian, Harry and Olive Newland and myself drove to Ferring Village Hall for the Albany Competition 2010 and to watch our entry "Cecil's Law."

The Albany Competition was started by a film making enthusiast called Syd Mitchell in 1966. Syd, as Chairman of The Albany Cine Club in Southwick suggested that a competition should be held between similar clubs in Sussex to find the best film made to a set theme.

Following Syd's death the Albany Club folded but the competition continued. In the early days amateurs made film on 8mm or 16mm, now the format has moved from video to mini DV tape to DVD. The competition was initially open to all Sussex clubs but as some faded,

the invitations now go to clubs in neighbouring counties.

Fourteen clubs are invited to participate but not all clubs take up the challenge. Each film must be no longer than 15 minutes and the film should be to the



theme for that year.

For several years we were invited but for various reasons did not enter, until our previous Competition Secretary, Penny Johnson, worked up enough enthusiasm from members to get a team together. The theme

in 2008 was "A Senior Moment" and we actually entered two films. "On Patrol" and "Just One of Them Thing's..." We won the Runners Up Trophy for "Just One of Them Thing's..." Last year the theme was "The Clock is Ticking", again we entered two films. "Nine Lives" and "Last Prayer." The Syd Mitchell Comedy Trophy was awarded to "Last Prayer."

This year there were 9 films. The theme was "In the Hot Seat." One of the films did not bear enough resemblance to the theme. However, "Cecil's Law" won the Runners Up Trophy, and the film, "Time Flies", made by Chichester Film & Video Makers won the Albany Trophy which means they will host the competition next year.

We were complimented by the judges for entering a well made and entertaining film. They thought the acting was good (**see pictures**), they commented on the good use of wide shots as well as appropriate close ups. They felt the locations had been well chosen and were especially complimentary about the lead actor, Pete Francis.

Rita Wheeler

VIEWING AND EDITING AVCHD

The first obvious benefit of using a card camera such as the Sony CX6 is the quick access to any of the clips that have been recorded. Each clip appears as a thumbnail (**see below**) on the viewfinder or on the TV connected via the HDMI outlet. The clips are played in sequence following any one that is touched on the viewfinder. Scrolling right through a tape is gone for ever. It becomes obvious why family snappers don't require editing, it is so easy to select the shots of little Johnny behaving badly. Unfortunately computers do not as yet have HDMI inputs (Hollywood again). The only way for direct connection is via a professional HDMI/Firewire converter box such as a Grass valley ADVC-HD50 which is around £600, about the same price as a typical camera.

The results however can be excellent with instant selection of clips fed into an existing editing system via firewire. This method allows mixing CX6 clips with taped clips to produce a movie that can be exported to tape or disk. At this point I can only claim experience in HD format but I am sure there is lots to explore in SD.

AVCHD employs enormous compression, it generates a key frame only every second with the intermediate 24 frames providing the changes. The amount of data stored depends on the speed and complexity of the scene changes during this period. The format is basically MPEG 4 or H264 with subtle differences, I can't pretend to understand these finer points. A folder containing a number of clips seems to have a very complex structure and leaving any small part out when transferring to a back up store can result in a malfunction. Backing up is sensible and allows the card to be used again. It is not easy to scan through the thumbnails once the card is outside the camera. The actual MTS video clips are buried deep inside a complex menu and are labelled 'Stream'. To my simple mind I don't see how it is possible carry out

cross fades etc. directly in AVCHD though I am told it has been done. The CX6 comes with an editing program on a disk which will only run on a fast PC or an Intel Mac running as one. Unfortunately the editing is done only after down converting to SD!

In the mean time I have been experimenting with various methods of converting AVCHD files into quicktime so that traditional editing can be performed on a Mac. This can be done very simply by importing the MTS files directly into imovie 09.

While this is possible by connecting the camera to the computer via USB2 it is easier to read the card in a separate reader which uses the computer supply. It is essential to use the latest issue of card reader that is compliant with class 6 or higher. Jessops are a safe source. iMovie 09 converts the AVCHD files into a special type of quicktime which takes at least 1.5 times real time. It is essential to set the preferences to maximum resolution which results in huge quicktime files

i.e. 45 GB/hour. Fortunately hard drives don't break the bank these days. iMovie 09 is

very clever with image stabilisation etc. but is a bit basic and wont allow exporting back to tape. This can be done by sending the finished product to iMovie 6 which also allows changes to the sound track. As I am not a great fan of iMovie 09 I have spent much effort looking into alternatives. What we do with the finished HD movie after editing is not obvious and will be discussed separately in a later article.

In the early stages it was only possible to view AVCHD clips on certain types of PC and not any Macs. The card can be played effectively on Sony playstation 3 and some Panasonic TVs but editing or recording seems impossible. An Intel Mac with Snow Leopard and Roxio Toast 10 will now not only play the clips directly but also convert them to quicktime or AVI for dropping into any number of editors.

Final Cut Express and iMovie 6 work fine. It is also possible to carry out very basic editing in quicktime itself. The PC equivalent of Toast I believe is called Creator. I have experimented with other converter programs such as VLC, Prism and Voltaic - all with varying degrees of success, Toast 10 however is now my favourite. I am sure other folk will come up with alternative solutions for using the new cameras.

Next month I will discuss what to do next and also briefly look at some other formats which can be very beneficial for some types of operation. Tape which is quick, easy and good for archiving seems to be being pushed aside, whether we like it or not.

Peter Matthews

COLLECTIVE SENTENCING

It is with some concern that we have to report that the WriteAngle Group have taken legal advice, and it has been decided to accept the legal judgement, in that they are all collectively guilty of a certain misdemeanour.

The sentence passed is that they shall be taken to Her Majesty's Prison in Sutton, Surrey, where they will be detained at her Majesty's pleasure for a term of not less than 3 hours.

During their term of imprisonment they will be served a three course meal by fellow inmates, on much longer terms of imprisonment, in the 3 star Prison Restaurant, called 'The Clink'.

I am sure that the experience will be a salutary one to each and every member of the Group.

Porridge might be on the menu!

How long a minute is, depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.



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.



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.



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

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Name:

Telephone:

Email: