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Meeting Reports for Season 2009-10

2009

10th September

On 10th September we held our first meeting after the summer break. Members were invited to bring along old films/videos for us all to watch. It was great fun to see such a huge variety of subjects, for example: an outdoor circus, a view of Ireland, trains at Porthmadog, a skiing holiday in France, a car rally, a music video, a film about an evening at the club from the early 1990s, and a film called "Mother", which was a sort of 'homage' to Psycho.

The "Mother" film also had a very interesting history. It had originally been shot by Patrick Sprague in about 1984 using Super 8 film. The editing was done manually with splicing and glue. Over 15 years ago it was transferred to VHS, and more recently he converted it from VHS to DV by means of a video to FireWire DV converter. Patrick then re-encoded the DV file to an MP4 file known as H.264, and then loaded it into iTunes and from there put it onto his iPhone. It was projected from his iPhone by our wonderful new projector.

The next meeting will be on 24th September and Alan Moore will be talking about "Buying and using Hi Def".

Jill Lampert

24th September

At our last club night we had a fascinating talk from High Definition enthusiast Alan Moore. He took us through possible pitfalls when moving to HD. No one likes nasty surprises, especially when buying expensive equipment. We looked at the camera, solid state is here and how the rolling shutters that CMOS cameras have now can give some weird results. Is your editor up to it and will the camera talk to it? What do you play your edited HD video on? What is meant by HD and are you really seeing 1080i resolution? Alan gave us an informative and entertaining evening, covering all these issues. He illustrated what he was saying with a helpful and well structured powerpoint presentation.

Jill Lampert

8th October

Tonight was the evening of competitions for short films at the club. The Mini-Video Competition was

2010

14th January

Meeting cancelled.

28th January

This meeting took place after a long break. The meal on 14th December was cancelled because there was general agreement that we weren't in the mood for celebrating Christmas so soon after the death of John Foster, who was a much loved and very important member and former chairman of the club. The meeting on 14th January was cancelled because there was snow and ice and the weather conditions made it impossible for most members to get to the club.

So it was good to get together again and have a sociable evening. It is a tradition to have an evening with 'chips 'n clips'. The idea is that members bring along some of their old movies or clips they have enjoyed taken from YouTube or television. In between watching these, we eat fish 'n chips (or sausage 'n chips... or just chips) and have a good time catching up with each other. This year we had the theme of 'hot clips'. The idea was that we would bring along our archive holiday movies from hot countries - hopefully this would cheer us up after the cold winter. And indeed it was most enjoyable to see the variety of films that were shown. The evening began with Roger Lawrie's film "The Birthplace of Modern Civilization" which was about Crete and the Minoan culture and Greek mythology. Keith Lewis entertained us with his film about Ayers Rock. Alan Moore brought along an interesting drama called "Dream Lover" - nothing to do with hot weather holidays - but well worth watching. He had made it with Bob Harper who was once a member of Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers. It was remarkable for its use of a wide range of different camera angles. I brought a little film about the Athens Olympics featuring Paula Radcliffe. I also brought a holiday film of Contamines, (which is a skiing resort) in the summer. Mike Gutowski brought some films on VHS, but sadly we weren't able to get the equipment to play them. Hopefully he will get them converted to DVD or mini DV tape so that we can see them another time. The Script competition, which was scheduled for 14th January, was postponed until 28th January. Surprisingly it had to be abandoned because of lack of entries. We'll have to think about whether

restricted to 5 minutes and our judges, Bob Wood and Doug Butler from Derby Moviemakers, were presented with seven very different films to look at. Roger Lawrie managed two entries; his "First Light" showing the glorious pictorial aspects of Mousehole in Cornwall (at least when you get up early) but his second film "I can Fly" was much more active with him paragliding off the Long Mynd in Shropshire.

Patrick Sprague found solace from the credit crunch in his "Peaceful Garden" but Jill Lampert was busy "Grappling With Greenhouse Gases" a struggle which earned her second place.

Trevor Mall put his "Best Foot Forward" to come third, with coverage of a pantomime-horse race but Tim Easton preferred to let the train take the strain as he shared a trip on the "Welsh Highland Railway, Portmadoc" with us.

Railways figured too in Mike Gutowski's video "Big Boys' Toys", about a friend having a train driving experience. This won him first place, but it's a pity he didn't get the fireman's breakfast in the end.

The judges were not finished yet, however, because they then had to watch the Sixty Second Competition, which had four entries this year.

John Foster entered a film about the bridge at Avignon called "Over or Under" trying to solve the age-old problem of why people danced on the bridge there, while Gordon Hunt's second prize winner asked "Where Am I?" The answer was the Minack theatre in Cornwall, so I hope this doesn't spoil the suspense for you. Trevor Mall achieved another third place with his brief portrait of Newhall Mill, while Jill Lampert's winner "Who's Singing?" defied easy description.

For those who couldn't make it there's the two film listings included. Most of you'll need them for reminding of the movies come the Entertainment Awards later in the season.

Mini Video Competition.

First Light: Beautiful Cornwall scenery with time lapse clips by R. Lawrie

Peaceful Garden: Monetary gloom versus beautiful garden by P. Sprague

I Can Fly: Paragliding in Shropshire (Re-Edited recently) by R. Lawrie

Grappling with Greenhouse Gasses: Dilemma of procedure between Husband & Wife by J. Lampert

Best Foot Forward: City centre chaos at a Pantomime Horse Race by T. Mall

West Highland Railway (at Portmadoc): Small scale train ride by T. Easton

Big Boy's Toys: Restored Steam Railway System by M. Gutowski

60 Second Competition.

Who's Singing?: A strange voice at the zoo, but whose ? by J. Lampert

New Hall Mill: The activities at a restored local Water Mill by T. Mall

Where Am I ? : Clues reveal beautiful Cornish Minack Theatre by G. Hunt

Over or Under: Snaps & clips of French Avion Bridge by J. Foster

John Foster / Trevor Mall

we want to hold the competition again next year, and if so, whether there's anything we can do to encourage people to bring along script ideas.

Trevor is still trying to round up members' contributions towards Sutton Spotlight. This is a project which was inspired by John Foster. His idea was that each of us would produce a short film about some aspect of Sutton Coldfield, and then the films would be gathered together and made into a DVD which would be of interest to the local community.

Jill Lampert

Reports for February to May are missing.

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22nd October

We held a special evening of films by the late John Seedhouse. John died of cancer shortly before Christmas last year. He had been a longstanding member of the club and an outstanding film maker. John's daughter and other members of his family made it a very special occasion by bringing along a great display of photographs of John and certificates of awards he had won for his films. They also kindly produced a wonderful spread of refreshments.

John's daughter Josephine introduced the films by recalling the pleasure John got from film making. She described the joy he felt when his cine film came back after it was developed and then getting down to the business of editing. Once digital video took over from cine film, John rather lost interest in film making, and turned his attentions elsewhere.

Having planned an evening of short films made by John Seedhouse, the show was nearly cancelled due to projector failure. Few own working cine gear as digital now rules. But Bill Green of the film watchers group Birmingham Cinema Appreciation Society brought his luxury lantern, so everyone could enjoy the show.

Over 20 years Mr Seedhouse had won regional & national competitions, and his variety of subjects was ably demonstrated. It included drama, documentary and animation. The full list shown on Thursday was:

Off The Rails: Playing on the tracks proves dangerous.

Head In The Clouds: Disabled lady becomes a flier.

Gramalkin: Witchcraft thrives in the country.

Behind Bars: Old lag escapes from prison in cartoon.

Vanishing Heritage: History & restoration of the canals.

Silent Sands: WWII mystery of drowned Americans.

The Sherrif: Cartoon tale of a lawman.

The Deadly Game: A boy discovers life's values.

Rattle In The Streets: An artist's passion for trams.

Made on a shoestring, his films were endowed with all the emotion of "Up", and they are still relevant today. Some could move you to tears.

Next meeting 12th November Tips Slips and Clips with Auf Wiedersehen Pet's first editor Gordon Hunt.

Trevor Mall

12th November

On Thursday 12th November Gordon Hunt gave us an entertaining and informative presentation on the subject of editing. Gordon has extensive experience as a professional editor working on such programs as Auf Wiedersehen Pet and the Teletubbies.

Gordon's presentation, fully illustrated with suitable clips, covered a wide range of editing problems and points to watch. These included the importance of reaction shots, the difficulty of editing a conversation if all the shots include both speakers, the importance of ensuring that music

doesn't drown out speech, checking for continuity errors, the use of chromakey and split screen and even making the eyes of a statue move.

He demonstrated the importance of not becoming too attached to any one particular shot. If it holds up the action, or doesn't fit it must be cut out!

Gordon also discussed some aspects of making a music video. This was particularly pertinent as our music video competition was due to be held at the next meeting. He pointed out that you can quite easily cut a bar from music or a whole verse or chorus from a song to suit your needs. The important thing is to start with the bed of music, and place visuals over it.

Most of the special effects that Gordon showed us can now be done relatively easily by anyone with a digital camera and a fairly basic computer editing system. This includes delightful effects like editing together two shots taken from the same angle, to give the effect of showing someone in two different parts of the same room at the same time.

It was interesting to contrast the availability of these special effects now compared with only twenty or thirty years ago. Gordon described a trip to London that he made in the 1980s to arrange for some simple wipes and a four way split screen effect to be included in the opening sequence for an Auf Weidesein Pet series. It involved a huge amount of work, and a visit to a London editing company who had special facilities. The total cost was £3,000.

Jill Lampert.

26th November

The Video to Music Competition was judged by Rob Day of Lichfield MM and the results were:

- 1st When I'm 64 by Jill Lampert
- 2nd O Fortuna by Stuart Mann
- 3rd Under Cover by Stuart Mann.

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