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Meeting Reports for Season 2011-12

2011

8th September

Introductory Meeting

The highlight of the first meeting this season was Gordon Hunt's film of the Royal Wedding. Previously he had handed out tapes to members, asking them to film themselves on Royal Wedding day. Eight members had done so and handed their tapes to Gordon. Gordon had then edited the Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers' video clips into a shortened version of the public footage of the Royal Wedding. He did a brilliant job, cleverly weaving in each person's contribution at the time when it happened in real time, and showing the stage that the Royal Wedding had got to by then. It was a masterpiece of editing, and enormous fun for the viewers.

The Club entry to the annual Midland Movie Makers Midsummer Madness film in a day competition was also shown. This year the title was 'Mastermind'. Eight club members took part - a record. Our finished film was placed third in the competition, which was the best result we have had so far. Dave Kinnaird also entertained us with a showing of his film about the Midsummer Madness Day. A sort of 'making of' film, but also with the purpose of showing how the competition works. Members were also invited to bring along their own films for showing.

Jill Lampert explained that there are two external competitions which invite entries of films to a certain theme (the same theme) and she encouraged the club to enter these competitions. The theme this year for both the Tony Rose competition and the North vs South competition is "Easier Said than Done". Jill's film "Fleece to Coat" was shown and members were asked their opinion on whether or not it fitted the theme. It was agreed that it did fit the theme.

22nd September

Bob Lorrimer Visit

Our guest speaker Bob Lorrimer came all the way from Yorkshire. We were pleased to welcome a number of visitors from other clubs in the region including Lichfield, Nuneaton and Worcester. Bob is well known for his very successful and very short films which often feature himself in the

2012

12th January

Sound Evening

Alan Moore led us into the new year with a discussion about sound, and especially the use of microphones during the first half of this evening. He had prepared a DVD of some of his own microphones in use.

He began by reminding us of the importance of actually listening to the sound being captured by using earphones - best of all closed back earphones.

He compared the effectiveness of his camcorder's onboard and an external shotgun mic by walking to the bottom of the garden, talking as he went. The shotgun mic picked up the distant sound much better.

Alan's presentation was very wide-ranging, including the use of a hand held mic for interviewing, how to reduce obtrusive background noise by using the speaker's body as a sound barrier, understand the pattern of a mic by turning it in a complete horizontal circle as someone speaks into it and the disadvantages of speaking directly into the mic.

After the outdoor work, Alan read poetry into various mics each placed in a variety of positions. Alan's message was that exactly which microphone you use and where you place it will depend on what effect you want to achieve.

After the break, the evening was opened out to other club members to show examples of their own equipment in use. This included Grahame playing sound captured by his Zoom Handy Recorder, for use as a soundtrack for cine film. Jill showed how she used her Zoom Handy Recorder with a tie clip mic for picking up the voice when the speaker was far from the camera. It can be used rather like a radio mic except that of course it has to be synchronised with the video in post production. Gordon showed clips from our Midsummer Madness film in a day video which was filmed by two different camcorders and he edited it so that it was easy to judge the difference between the two microphones. Most notable was the usefulness of a directional mic (on a boom pole) pointing downwards towards the speakers, compared with a shotgun mic pointing horizontally at the speakers. The latter picked up a considerable amount of ambient, but quite distant noise from cars.

central part.

He brought along a good selection of his films including *The Drill* and *Rock Bottom* and his latest films "There's Something about Archie" and "The Steps".

Bob is a tremendous enthusiast for the use of Digital SLR cameras for HD video. He brought along his Canon 7D and his Panasonic Gh2 and gave us a lot of interesting information about their merits.

He also brought his Glidetrack. He uses Vimeo to display his films on the internet, and he encouraged us to do the same because he said that the quality of picture on Vimeo is infinitely superior to the quality on YouTube.

Bob also uses Magic Bullet Looks which he find very useful.

We showed Bob's films, which were in HD on Blu-Ray discs, on our new dvd/blu-ray player, using our excellent projector and Trevor's lovely screen. The films looked marvellous.

Bob was an entertaining speaker whose enthusiasm is infectious and inspiring.

13th October

Mini + Micro film competitions

Geoff Caudwell kindly came all the way from Derby to judge our Mini and Micro Film competitions.

The results were as follows:

Mini Video - Maximum length 5 minutes

- 1st. Let Me Have a Go by Dave Kinnaid
- 2nd. Together by Dave Kinnaid and Trevor Mall
- 3rd. Wood Hall - An Architectural History Jill Lampert

Micro Video - Maximum length 60 seconds

- 1st. Bollards Jill Lampert
- 2nd. Newbury Coat in a Minute Jill Lampert
- 3rd. Practical Pranks Alan Moore 3rd

27th October

BIAFF films

A selection of films from BIAFF 2010 and 2011 were shown. During the first half of the evening we watched:

Bus Baby by Jason Hasford and Gino Evans
Days Away by Circle Eight Film Group
Between by Michal Stenzel & Anna Kasperska
Clint by Florian Gregor & Philipp Scholz
 There was plenty of time for a discussion about the merits of each of these films, and it was inspiring to see such quality work.

During the second half of the evening we watched Michael Slowe's very beautiful film *The Hounds and the Huntsman*.

10th November

"Twelve Good Men and True" + "The Story so far Challenge"

Gordon Hunt's evening of filming something live at the club. He had held a 'committee meeting' at his

26th January

Script Competition and Mike Gutowski on Transitions

Tonight was our annual script competition. As always, this was a very informal competition. Members were invited to read out or tell us about a film idea, a film story or a fully worked script.

There were four entries:

"Snap" by Roger Lawrie
 "The Drill" by Alan Moore
 "Lightening Strike - Doppelgangers" by Tim Easton
 "Looking Up" by Alan Eades

Voting was by a show of hands. On this occasion it turned out unexpectedly difficult to establish exactly what the result was! Initially "The Drill" appeared to have the most votes, with "Snap" coming second, and "Looking Up" third. However, after some efforts at re-counting, it seems that at least one voter changed his/her vote and that left "The Drill" and "Snap" as joint winners.

In the second part of the evening, Mike Gutowski gave a short presentation on Transitions. He explained that they perform the role that punctuation performs in the written word. He reminded us of the dictionary definition, which was "passage from one place or state to another".

Mike encouraged us to use fancy transitions sparingly. He felt that if you don't notice that a transition has been used, then you have probably used it very successfully. He pointed out that some transitions have an accepted meaning. For example a straight cut would indicate that no time has been lost, or that events are taking place simultaneously. A cross-fade or dissolve suggests a short passage of time. Whereas a fade-to-black indicates a long passage of time.

The evening ended with a lively discussion about the use of transitions. We were reminded that in the days of cine film, there were no fancy transitions. Some members have found the more fancy transitions useful in film titles, or for specific purposes when they have been very carefully chosen to provide a desired effect. Everyone agreed that they should be used sparingly.

9th February

Special Effects - by Gordon Hunt and Jill Lampert

It's taken a while to write this as Gordon and Jill gave us so much to think about. They showed us that many special effects are so easy we can all use them (where appropriate of course). To prove that effects are not just visual, Jill started by showing a video, "Beautiful Sounds" by Brian Dunckley, which uses exaggerated sounds as a young woman puts on her make-up, to great comic affect. Showing how easy it is to make a person or objects appear and disappear by putting a camcorder on a tripod and stopping and starting filming, Jill showed her video "Tidy Up Time", where Ella put things in place by just a magic wave.

Reducing opacity, placing one video layer on top of another and reversing video in edit were some of

house the previous week, and it had been filmed. He brought along the edited film, and showed the members that during that committee meeting his 'oscar' statuette had gone missing. He invited members to speculate on what had happened to the statuette, and their suggestions were filmed for future editing.

The evening was very successful, with all the members present making suggestions about what could have happened to the oscar.

Eventually they were shown a second clip, which showed that in fact it had been stolen by the whole committee to award as a prize. The audience made suggestions about what they thought the prize was for, and they got very close to the truth, which was that it was stolen in order to award it to Gordon Hunt for the "Maddest Idea for A Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers Meeting". It was then presented to Gordon.

All this was filmed, and will one day be edited into a fun Club Film with mass participation.

After the tea break, members had the opportunity to show what they had done with the "Story So Far" challenge. At the beginning of the year, Roger Lawrie had provided members with the first twenty minutes from a television programme. Members were invited to edit this down to a short clip showing what had happened during the twenty minute clip. The idea was that the finished clip would show someone who hadn't seen the full twenty minutes 'the story so far' so that they would be able to follow the story from that point onwards.

This challenge was taken by eight members. It was not a competition: just a bit of fun. It was fascinating to see so many different styles of editing and different interpretations of the challenge. Many chose to do something which was more of a 'trailer' to whet the appetite of potential viewers. There was time for the editors to say something about their approach, and to answer a few questions. This challenge really demonstrated what a creative lot the Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers are!

A great evening.

24th November

Video to Music competition + Mike's Music Challenge

This year we tried a new challenge, which was suggested by Mike Gutowski. Mike chose two pieces of music ("Memories" and "(I've had) The Time of My Life"), and members were invited to make videos to one or both of those pieces of music. The idea was to have fun comparing different people's interpretations of the same musical pieces. It was not intended to be competitive - just a bit of fun.

The event was held on the same evening as the regular Video to Music competition, and films which had actually been prepared for Mike's Music Challenge were eligible for the Video to Music competition. Indeed almost all the films were entered in the competition.

The Music to Video Competition was judged by the members of the Club. No one was allowed to vote

the many techniques used in making a person appear ghostly and objects appear to move on their own. Changing colours, using Colour Correction software made clothing magically appear different. Filming against a green or blue screen background allowed people and objects to appear against a different background. These are all effects used regularly in cinema films and on TV, as Jill demonstrated using examples from "The Purple Rose of Cairo" - Woody Allen, "Remote Control" - by Mike Shaw of Orpington Film Club, her own films and even Charlie Chaplin.

Gordon showed how a title sequence or ident could be made more interesting using materials like cat litter (unused) and toy bricks to creating lettering, tipping them off the surface board then reversing the video, the right lighting being essential. A poster of a country cottage becomes real by filming with real wild flowers swaying in the breeze in front. A sequence shot for a commercial film which took place on the Great Central Railway in Leicestershire showed smoke above a train coming into the station, Gordon explained that roof parts were hand painted onto a small sheet of glass which was held in front of the camera as filming took place, the smoke was added later. I'm not sure this is a technique we could use in the club, but there may be other ways.

Next, Gordon and Jill stood in her snow covered back garden to demonstrate the "jump through time", a favourite Doctor Who effect of Gordon's. Showing his athletic prowess, Gordon sprinted to get warm in the cold and stand next to Jill, he jumped, disappeared for a few seconds, then jumped to reappear. A fixed tripod was essential to film, as Jill also had to be filmed standing alone. The effect was achieved by Gordon (a.k.a. "The Timelord") in edit.

Another locked off tripod sequence, shows Jill and Gordon suddenly jumping from Jill's hallway floor and appearing to be upside down, standing on the ceiling (hope they wiped their feet first!). Yet more green screen effects.

This was an entertaining and inspiring evening which we all learned something from. So now we have to go and try out some of these tricks. Time to disappear!

23rd February

Our annual Holiday Movie Competition was held on 23rd February this year. We were fortunate to have Kim Sabido, broadcast journalist as our judge. The entries were varied and included a portrait of Nice, walking in the Maritime Alps, a humorous look at Stratford-upon-Avon's theatre tower, sailing around Cardiff Bay, a visit to a Cornish railway, more humor, boating in Norfolk and a holiday in Thailand.

Results:

- 1st. Nature in the Maritime Alps by Jill Lampert
- 2nd. Taste of Thailand by Roger Lawrie
- 3rd joint Much Ado! By Mike Gutowski
- 3rd. Joint April Bounty goes to Norfolk by Ian Reed

8th March

for their own entry. In order to provide some feedback to film makers, members were invited to write a sentence each about what they liked about each film and what they thought could be improved.

The following were the results:

1st. Father and Son Dave Kinnaird

2nd. If You're Irish Come Into the Parlour Jill Lampert

3rd. Time for Love Dave Kinnaird

8th December

Clips Bits and Chips

Members brought along films or bits of equipment to show to other members. Grahame Tench showed us a number of his old Super 8 films on a period projector. It was a dual gauge Eumig DL projector (which can show Super 8mm and Standard 8mm films) which, in its time, was stated to be one of the three top projectors for light output, showing a bright image from the 8mm gauges. It had a revolutionary low wattage bulb with only 100 watts but with the reflector and an f1 lens produced a bright image. Grahame showed Standard 8mm films 'Traction Engine Rally', 'Sutton Carnival 1971', 'Spring and Summer' and 'Biggleswade' (veteran and vintage aircraft). It was a good reminder of the quality of actual cine film compared with digital video. Several members brought films to entertain us, including a festive Christmas film from Dave Kinnaird showing members of his family decorating a Christmas tree. Alan Moore produced a huge display of old 16mm film on big reels. Roger had a short holder rather like a mini monopod, for holding a camcorder. He says it gives him more versatility for camera height and camera angles. We enjoyed a celebratory meal of fish and chips kindly organised by Mike Gutowski.

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Guest Speaker Brian Ratcliffe Automatic Choice

Our guest speaker, Brian Ratcliffe, brought a wealth of information and ideas for us to ponder. He comes from a photography background being a relative newcomer to film making. However, his films were top quality and belied the fact that he uses a ten year old camcorder. He had several key points for us to consider. Brian put down the quality of his films to the fact that he never leaves the camcorder controls on automatic settings. He always sets the focus manually and uses a piece of photographer's grey card graded at 18% to set the exposure. He also illustrated the importance of composition - dividing the scene into thirds and placing objects of interest along the imaginary lines. It was clear that this technique is very effective, but how many of us think to do it? Similarly, the use of 'frames' such as convenient gaps in trees, walls or any other handy inanimate object to frame the scene in the foreground, adds effective depth to the shot. Finally, Brian reminded us that the best time to film is at sunrise and sunset when the sun is low in the sky creating interesting shadows. He illustrated these points with a selection of his films. Bradgate Park and Benedictus stood out for me but no doubt members had their own favourites. Brian showed us that not only was he a good videographer but also a good presenter, as the number of questions asked by members showed. It was gratifying to note that all Brian's suggestions did not cost anything and were easy to take on board - with the possible exception of getting up to film at sunrise .

22nd March

Midland Movie Makers Inter-Club Competition and 'Ads in an evening' preparation

For the first time we hosted the Midland Movie Makers Inter-Club League. This is a competition between the six clubs that belong to Midland Movie Makers. Each club hosts the competition once a year. Our job was to judge one film each from the five other clubs.

We had an audience of over forty people! Many of these were members of other clubs who had come for this rather special occasion. It was very pleasing to have such a big audience, which really gave the place a buzz. There were visitors from Lichfield, Derby, Leicester and Nuneaton. And there were also some visitors from Wulfrun, who do not even belong to Midland Movie Makers, but came along to enjoy the programme.

We were treated to five excellent films. The results were:

1st - Flower Power - Lichfield Movie Makers

2nd - Honour Him - Leicester Movie Makers

3rd - Bush Christmas - WAVE

4th - Bird Rock - Derby Movie Makers

5th - The River Leam - Nuneaton Movie Makers

The evening began with Alan Atkinson, Vice-President, and former Chairman of the IAC presenting Gordon (our chairman) with a certificate to acknowledge the 75th Anniversary of Sutton

Coldfield Movie Makers. He congratulated us on our 'first 75 years'!!!

After the competition was over, Gordon introduced our 'Ads in an evening' project. The idea is that we get into teams and produce some very short adverts. We watched some little modern foreign commercial adverts that Ian Reed had brought along. Very original and memorable. Then Grahame Tench screened a club cine film, with sound, which we believe dates from the 1960s. It was called 'End of Part One'. Geoff Bate-Jones was able to tell us something about the making of that film, because he has been a member since 1957! This film began with spooky shots of a woman in what looked like a murder mystery. Then the credits said 'End of Part 1' and we were treated to a series of clever and funny adverts. This was followed by a dvd of a movie made in the 1990s. This film was also called 'End of Part 1' and consisted of a modernised version of the woman in danger shown in the earlier film. At the end of Part 1 we were shown some more modern adverts including one made by Alan Moore about 'rescue dogs'.

All this was a preparation for our 'Ads in an evening' project. We drew 'out of a hat' names of the team leaders of teams we were to join. The idea is that we communicate before April 12th for brainstorming and planning...can we keep up the standards of our predecessors?

12th April

Practical evening

Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers meeting room looked quite different on Thursday night. No screen. No projector. No chairs set out in rows. Instead there were lots of people with camcorders and tripods. Did I see a Steadicam there? People dressed up in unusual ways. Michael Finney looking very smart with a jacket and bright tie. Gordon Hunt wearing a white bow tie and walking about with his shoe laces undone.

And what odd things people were doing: Mike Gutowski was wielding a huge axe over a melon. Alan Eades and Grahame Tench were sitting at a nicely laid dining table thumping their cutlery on the table and shouting "We want food". Alan Moore sitting in front of a blue screen and saying "This is not a Green Screen".

All very strange.

We'll have to wait until 24th May to find out exactly what it was all about.

But I can tell you that it was Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers having a practical evening of filming advertisements.

26th April

Celebration of the Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers' Golden Jubilee

Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers was founded in 1937 under the name of The Vesey Amateur Cine Society. On 26th April 2012 we celebrated our 75th Anniversary by showing a selection of films from our archive.

Every single film shown was actually made on cine film: mainly on Standard 8, although one was on Super 8. I wonder when was the last time that a complete programme at SCMM was all actual film? No video. No digital video. No dvds.

Gordon Hunt had trawled through the archive (a big suitcase) over the past few months, viewing films on his projector. He was a little hampered because he didn't have the facility to reproduce sound, so he had to guess what was being said! His selection turned out to be most enjoyable and quite varied.

Grahame Tench brought along his projectors which were able to reproduce good sound. He managed the projection for the evening, with the assistance of Alan Eades, and it went very well. Photos are on the Photos page.

It was noticeable that all the films were story films rather than documentaries. This is in contrast to the general run of films we are producing now, which are almost all factual, with just a sprinkling of fiction/dramas.

We were delighted to welcome a number of guests, including some former members of the club. Jan Lewis, wife of former member Keith Lewis made a delicious anniversary cake with a very professionally executed decoration designed by Gordon Hunt. (see photo in our gallery) The cake was to be cut by whichever member of the audience had joined SCMM first. Geof Bate-Jones (a present member) joined in 1957. Dennis Bennett (a former member) is believed to have joined around the same time, but no one, not even Geoff or Dennis were quite sure who joined first, so they both cut the cake. (see photo of Dennis Bennett with Geoff in background) And the first person to eat a slice was Ian Reed, the newest member present (see photo). He joined SCMM this season.

After the showing of "After you Mr K" Dennis Bennett introduced himself and explained that he had been involved in editing that film. Geoff Bate-Jones had assisted in the making of a number of the films, and he appeared in one with the title of "Goldrush (of '76)". During the showing, he was able to add to the fun of the evening by telling us something about the making of several of the films.

It was an evening to celebrate the past, and as well as former members and their wives/husbands, we were very pleased to welcome members of some other clubs, including some from Wulfrun and from Derby. Simon Sumner, the current chairman of CEMRIAC was in the audience, and so was David Newman, Competition Manager of BIAFF.

10th May

2012 Open Video Competition

Our judge for the Open Video Competition this year was Alan Atkinson who kindly came all the way from Rugby.

The results were as follows:

- 1st. The Newbury Coat Challenge Jill Lampert
- 2nd. Remembrance 2012 Phil Walker
- 3rd. A Time of our Lives Doug Hemmings

24th May*2012 A.G.M.*

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 24th May. The existing committee members and chairman agreed to stand for re-election, and we voted in one new committee member: Doug Hemmings. So the current officers are: Gordon Hunt (Chairman), and Trevor Mall, Doug Hemmings, Roger Lawrie, Mike Gutowski, Tim Easton and Jill Lampert (committee members). Trevor Mall was re-elected President.

After the AGM, the annual awards were presented. This year's winners were:

Mini Movie (5 minute movie) - "Let Me Have a Go" - Dave Kinnaird

Micro Movie (60 second movie) - "Bollards" - Jill Lampert

Video to Music - "Father and Son" - Dave Kinnaird

Holiday Video - "Nature in the Maritime Alps" - Jill Lampert

Script Competition - (joint winners) "The Drill" - Alan Moore and "Snap" - Roger Lawrie

Open Video Cup - "The Newbury Coat Challenge" - Jill Lampert

Best Editing - "Nature in the Maritime Alps" and "Nice the Beautiful" - Jill Lampert

Best Original Sound - "The Newbury Coat Challenge" - Jill Lampert

Best Cinematography - "Nature in the Maritime Alps" - Jill Lampert

Entertainment Award - "The Newbury Coat Challenge" - Jill Lampert

Chairman's Cup - Awarded to Sheila Moore for her exceptional services to the club.

After the break, Gordon showed the club film "And the Oscar Goes To". It is based on a story of a committee meeting held at Gordon's house, where an Oscar trophy (not a solid gold one!) disappears after the committee meeting. Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers are asked to watch a film of the committee meeting and work out where it's gone. I think Gordon said that 14 members of the club took part. Gordon had taken great trouble to edit it so that everyone who had contributed had plenty of air time and could re-live the pleasure of making the film. It ended with wonderful credits (rather in the style of The Magnificent Ambersons) with each participant being shown and named. And Gordon handed out 'Gold' chocolate bars for everyone.

This was followed by a delightful showing of the results of our "Ads in an evening" project. Lots of advertisements, which demonstrated just how creative we can be when we get down to it. What came through very strongly was the pleasure that we movie makers got out of working together on something which was jokey and fun.

The evening was rounded off with Michael Finney showing us clips of film taken using his new home-made slider. He also demonstrated the slider for us. It is a remarkably ingenious device which can be used as an ordinary slider (like a mini dolly) and also has a motor so that motorized time lapse footage can be taken, AND it can be used like a crane. Most impressive. All for the price of about

15 pounds. It also required lots of time and a good creative brain.

31st May

Jubilee Dinner

22 members and their guests came together to enjoy a meal to conclude the club's Diamond Jubilee Year celebrations.

Mike Gutowski had arranged outside caterers to provide the meal in our usual meeting room. The menu was good and well prepared as a buffet. To complete the evening, Jill Lampert arranged, and provided explanatory labels of, an exhibition of members' equipment. These items were on display during the meal and at its conclusion their owners gave an informal presentation of their exhibits. A splendid evening to bring our Jubilee year to a close; and, surprise (!) some photos are on the Photos page.

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