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Meeting Reports for Season 2013-14

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2013
2014

12th December

*Fish, Chips & Clips.
Members films for discussion.*

We held our regular Fish and Chips night which is our way of celebrating Christmas. We began the evening with the meal, which was brought in by Mike Gutowski. After the food, we watched films that members had brought in. Surprisingly this year only Alan Moore brought in films he had made. These included an episode of his Jack and Grandad series which was shot on his new Panasonic AG-AC160 camcorder. The quality of the picture was most impressive. We were also entertained by various films by film makers from other clubs brought along by Jill Lampert. Julian introduced his club film project "Shooting...".

28th November

Competition Night - Video to Music Competition

The Video to Music competition was judged this year by Geof Caudwell of Derby Movie Makers. After the judging and helpful judge's comments, members watched some most enjoyable music videos made by Geof himself.

Video to Music Competition Result:



1st Phantasia by Ann and Arf Fletcher

22nd May

The AGM, the last meeting of the season was well attended, with only two members absent - one due to ill health and one because he was Presiding Officer at the European Elections in his area.

The meeting began with the usual speeches by the Chairman and Officers. The Chairman pointed out that we have more drama projects on the go than ever before: Julian Austwick's "The Decision", Ian Reed's "Wishes" and "Moving Oleta" are all Club projects in progress. Entries for Internal Competitions have been good, with more individuals submitting entries than last year. The External Competitions Secretary drew attention to the fact that Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers' club films and individual members' films have won more external competitions than ever before. A record total of 9 this season.

This was followed by the presentation of Awards. These included certificates for all the winners of competitions during the year, and the announcement of the winners of the annual awards and the presentation of those trophies.



This year the Entertainment Award was won by Jill Lampert. Jill won "Best Cinematography" and "Ambition" by the best use of Sound"



rded to Julian Austwick for his outstanding contribution to the Club.

current members of the (Gordon Hunt, Tim East



2nd New Hall Mill in the Spring by Michael Finney
3rd You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone by Jill Lampert

14th November

Gordon Hunt's editing workshop and clinic.

In the first half of the meeting Gordon Hunt analysed the editing of Colin Davis' film "Pecorama". Colin had previously provided Gordon with the film and with unused clips of the same subject. Gordon's approach was to keep to the length of Colin's film, but 'slide' some of the clips so as to show different parts of them and to make the best use of them, and sometimes to rearrange the clips or even to play them backwards to create the effect he wanted. Gordon discussed each of his changes and gave editing tips along the way. It was a most instructive session. Gordon was eager to stress that there is no "right" way of editing.

In the second half of the evening we had the first club showing of "Revlooshun" version 1 and Gordon spoke a little about some of the editing challenges he had to face. Then we watched a short dvd of experiments that Arthur Fletcher had been working on using Apple's "Motion". And finally we watched a short drama brought in by some visitors.

24th October

MMM League at SCMM and a Mini Presentation.

Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers hosted the first Midland Movie Makers League fixture of the season. We were pleased to welcome visitors from Lichfield Movie Makers, Nuneaton Moviemakers, Leicester Movie Makers and Derby Movie Makers. The judging was done by members of Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers each putting the films in order of merit. The clear winner was "A Day in the Life of Nathaniel Pitt Langford", a film made by Brian Ratcliffe of Nuneaton Moviemakers.

The competition was followed by a mini presentation by Roger Lawrie on the subject of DSLR vs Camcorder. Roger has both a DSLR and camcorder, and he is learning how to use his DSLR to best effect. He discussed the merits of each. Roger is impressed by the quality of the pictures he can produce with the DSLR. The DSLR's ability to restrict the depth of field is one of its attractive features. It also does well in low light. However a major drawback is the poor audio recording and lack of an earphone socket. He stressed that it is necessary to focus manually and that a tripod is a necessity. For these reasons it is not suitable for 'run and gun' type of filming.

There were lively interventions from a sceptical audience who were clearly overwhelmingly camcorder users.

10th October

Lawrie, Mike Gutowski, Doug Hemmings and Jill Lampert). There was discussion about what information judges should be given, a proposed email protocol for the Club, and whether actors' travelling expenses and/or the cost of hiring audition space for Club films could be authorised by the Committee. It was agreed that in future films which are made by 3 or more members of the Club are to be regarded as "Club films". This is significant for the purposes of Public Liability Insurance.



The meeting ended on a happy note, with the projection of three Club One Minute Comedies, and clips from Ian Reed's Club film "Wishes".

The next meeting will be on 11th September 2014 at the start of the new season.

8th May

The Open Video Competition was judged by Rob Day from Lichfield Movie Makers. Rob kindly made constructive comments about each of the entries before announcing the winners.

Fourteen entries were shown. Tim (the Competition Secretary) had to exclude two additional entries because there was insufficient time to show them all.



The final result was:

1st "The Patient Fisherman" by Jill Lampert,
2nd "Edinburgh feels like home" by Roger Lawrie,
Joint 3rd "Ullswater Lake" by Andy Wills and
"Phantasia" by Ann and Arf Fletcher.

24th April

This was a practical evening devoted to the making of One Minute Comedies.

We had drawn lots to allocate ourselves into three teams. During the previous week or two, teams had communicated with each other, and so at least the seeds of an idea about what was to be filmed were there before the evening began.

The room was full of equipment ranging from Michael Finney's homemade crane, Jill's slider, the Club lights (which have been given a new lease of life by Roger who has adapted them so that they'll take CFL bulbs), one of Jill's cheapo softboxes, Alan and Ian's sound equipment and a mass of camcorders and tripods.

Each of the groups did some of their filming out of doors while it was still light. Indoors, in the big hall, when necessary the director of a film would make a loud announcement that shooting was about to begin. Club members were careful to

Competition Night - Mini-film and Micro-film Competitions.

The Mini Movie (Five Minute film) Competition and the Micro Movie (60 Second film) were judged by Richard Brown, who gave useful feedback on all films.

Micro-film (1 minute)

Competition result:

1st. 'The Ambition' by Jill

Lampert

2nd. 'Heart Broken By Dusk' by Michael Finney

3rd. 'Handover' by Jill Lampert
Mini-film (5 minute) Competition result:

1st, 'Big Birds 'n Little 'Uns' Jill Lampert

2nd. 'Bread & Breakfast' Michael Finney

3rd. 'The Last Laugh' by Ian Reed

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26th September

BIAFF films and DIY kit by Michael Finney.

At the last meeting of Sutton Coldfield Movie Makers a selection of winning films from British International Film Festival (BIAFF) competitors were shown. Entries are received from all over the world and the selection we saw came from USA, Netherlands as well as the UK.

No Regrets. A thoughtful study of forgetful old age, modern technology and its consequences. Members were impressed that this had been made by a young film maker and also the quality of the acting.

The Egg. Humorous tale of boiled eggs, a disgraced bureaucrat and the waiting paparazzi. Well constructed comedy film.

Augenblick in Mir, Ein.(In the Nick of Time) A well executed film of a man contemplating suicide but then notices a small boy watching. He stops and performs various tricks to amuse the boy who we discover is his son. Discussion about this film centred on the credits at the end which read more like a commercially produced film rather than an amateur film. The supporting music had been specially composed for the film.

David. Quirky comedy about women discussing a friend's copy of the Michaelangelo statue of David. It was felt this was almost a slap-stick comedy with caricature villains. Obviously the makers had enjoyed themselves but when for instance there was a chase scene members felt this was too long.

Italian Chapel. Documentary about the building of an Italian Chapel in Orkney by Scapa Flow. A lot of research had gone into the film about the prisoners of war who had constructed the Chapel whilst strengthening the defences at Scapa Flow. This was a very static film by its nature.

Present from the Past. Modern Christmas story where sorrow turns to joy. A worthy winner, members particularly liked the music to the film. Following a break, member Mike Finney, demonstrated some homemade gadgets to help with our hobby.

One problem facing all photographers is stray light

keep quiet during the filming. A bit chaotic, but a lot of fun.

The results will be shown at the last meeting of the season.

10th April

Pip Critten came all the way from Plymouth to give a practical demonstration of lighting technique.

He brought a fascinating selection of equipment with him, including such things as banks of fluorescent lights, LED panels, fresnel lights, a softbox, an umbrella, and many other accessories including a reflector. He set up and demonstrated three point lighting for a single person and then for two people in an interview situation.



Members of the audience were invited to move the lights to try out the effects of moving the lights or reducing or increasing their intensity. Pip emphasised that lighting is an art and that exactly what effect you wish to achieve will be a matter of personal preference.

During the evening he gave many tips about useful bits and pieces that are available which can be very helpful in setting up lighting situations. He also gave advice about what to look out for when purchasing equipment.

27th March

Jill Lampert did a presentation on "Storytelling with Impulse Footage". She began by emphasising the all important role of Storytelling in film. Then she showed various films to illustrate some of the ingredients of audience grabbing ways of telling a story. Members were invited to discuss possible uses for footage which had been shot without any particular film story in mind - both using just the existing footage, and by combining it with other footage. Members had been invited to bring in some of their own clips for discussion. The second part of her talk covered ways of ensuring that we come home with editable footage by preparation (if possible) and otherwise by relying on good habits such as filming "a beginning" and "an ending" and habitually filming sequences rather than just individual shots as well as being sure to film lots of close-ups.

13th March

Gordon Hunt, our Chairman, led a session on camcorder pre-sets. He introduced the subject by explaining basic camera settings with a filmed demonstration of how they work on an old fashioned (non-digital) camera. Gordon then went

hitting the lens and degrading the image. Mike had made a substantial lens hood from an old meat/margarine container, painted it black, lined it inside with none reflective material and then showed some film with and without the lens hood. The difference was very noticeable.

Another issue is that of lighting; he had purchased a number of battery powered LED workshop lamps that attached to a section of salvaged washing machine, by magnets, and provided a very useful lighting stand without the heat generated by high powered mains lamps.

Films depend on different angles of view and using some wheels off a skate board, a broom handle and a mounting board, he was able to take very low angle shots.

He also demonstrated a support for a microphone using a short length of tube, O-rings and a rubber washer which removed handling noise from the microphone.

A homemade dolly again using skateboard wheels, O-rings completed his gadgets, showing what could be achieved with simple materials and tools.

He ended the evening by demonstrating some film taken on a mini recorder, waterproof to 30m and supplied with any number of connectors and means of attaching to helmets, cars etc., all for under £40. The quality was excellent.

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12th September

Films and Michael Finney's mini-presentation.

The SCMM season began with a glittering show of our summer efforts. First of all were the club films we had made. These included "Busted" the movie made in a day at Midland Movie Makers Midsummer Madness event in June, Doug Hemmigs' Lichfield Ghosts which was a fun movie made in two sessions - one in Lichfield and one in front of a fire at Jill's home, a rough cut of the film "Revlooshun" which is being made with the North vs South competition in mind, and a time lapse of Trinity Players putting up scenery for their latest production, which Michael Finney made on behalf of SCMM.

We were then treated to an excellent presentation by Michael Finney which included his tips and tricks for better movie making and a look at the use of ND filters and polarising filters.

The evening ended with films individual members had made over the summer. Julian showed a film of a child's birthday party. Ian Reed showed a documentary of an event and a short fiction film. There were more films than we had time to show, so a great beginning to the season.

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through the various pre-sets on his Panasonic SD900 explaining what they do and showing us the effects of using them on little films that he'd prepared. Some pre-sets appeared to be particularly useful e.g. the Spotlight which picks out the brightest part of the scene and lights for that, and the Fireworks setting which sets the aperture to a relatively closed position, giving a dark background. It also sets the focus to infinity.

This avoids the problem of the camcorder searching both for focus and for exposure during a firework display.

The second half of the evening was devoted to Julian's club project.

27th February

Paula Webster, award winning Midlands film maker, entertained us with a selection of her films. Paula showed us films which demonstrated her development as a film maker from "In Search of Lemurs", which was one of her early wildlife films to her latest film "In Search of Tigers". She invited discussion from the audience, and members responded with enthusiasm. The three other films that were screened were "One Block Challenge", "A Woman's Work is Never Done" and "Coureurs des Bois". Paula also brought along a selection of her equipment and introduced us to its uses.

13th February

The annual Holiday Competition was judged by Bob Wood of Derby Movie Makers.

The results were:

- 1st "Grazalema" by Jill Lampert,
- 2nd "Ullswater Lake" by Andy Wills and
- 3rd "Florida Rough Riders" by Michael Finney.



After the competition was over, the Club was entertained by Andy Wills singing (to the tune of California Hotel by the Eagles) his own comic version which told of a tutorial on recording voiceovers that Ian Reed gave to Jill Lampert at her home recently.

We then watched one of Bob Wood's latest holiday movies entitled 'Chillswim'.

30th January(extra meeting)

A meeting was held in Dave's house for those who are interested in being involved in the project to make a film to the theme "IF" for the Midland Movie Makers Tony Rose competition and the North vs South competition. We discussed the various ideas which were put forward as stories on the "IF" theme. There were plenty of good ideas. The story we have chosen is Julian Austwick's "It's Fate".

There is now such enthusiasm for making dramas that there will be at least three drama projects pursued over the summer: As well as the Club film

"It's Fate", members will be supporting Ann and Arf Fletcher's "Moving Oleta" and Ian Reed's "Lottery".

23rd January

The Script competition had 5 entries. It was impressive to see how much thought had gone into each of the entries. The entrants read out synopses and excerpts from their scripts. The title of each script was hung on a makeshift 'washing line' as a reminder to the members, and then there was a vote by the members. In the past we have voted by a show of hands, but this year we decided to try having a secret vote. The results were:



1st "Moving Oleta" by Ann and Arf Fletcher,



2nd "It's Fate" by Julian Austwick and
3rd "Retirement" by Jill Lampert.

In the second half of the evening we viewed the "Editing Challenge" offerings. Dave had kindly provided the footage, and we were delighted that eleven members had had a go at editing it. The maximum length allowed was 2 minutes. It was a wonderful display, really demonstrating what a lot of creativity, skill and imagination there is in the club.

9th January

*Mini Presentations and
Julian's Club Film.*

The evening began with Michael Finney outlining his Masterclass Workshops which are to take place in Sutton Coldfield on 5 Saturdays with two week intervals, beginning on 1st March.

This was followed by Ian Reed's presentation on recording voiceovers. He showed us the equipment he has used until recently, which included a DAT recorder. He now uses a pop shield and a large diaphragm condenser microphone and xlr leads. This is recorded via a mixer onto a small notebook computer. Ian's voiceovers are exceptionally well recorded. He was able to answer a few questions, but had so much knowledge to offer that he could easily have filled much more time, and hopefully he'll do further presentations on this subject in the future.

Ian was followed by Jill Lampert whose presentation was on basic stop-motion for titles.



Her Powerpoint presentation included short films showing the technique in action, and also lots of examples which she had prepared especially for the evening. Her examples included things that had gone wrong such as failing to keep the light/aperture constant and getting hand shadows caught on camera, and she explained and demonstrated (on film) the technique of replacement which can be very effective. By its nature this type of animation is not as smooth as titles made with appropriate software, but stop motion animation is easy and is fun to do and a great opportunity for creativity. It has its own charm.

The rest of the evening was devoted to Julian's club film. He had prepared the script for the



evening, which included a line for every member who was willing to take a spoken part, and plenty of opportunity for club members to act out emotions such as laughter and being aghast. Great fun.

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