

Potters Bar FilmMakers

The Video Club for East Herts.

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



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Autumn Newsletter 2016

Affiliated Member



The Film & Video Institute
North Thames Region

John Parkes



A Tribute by Christine Collins F.A.C.I.

When I left school a lady gave me one bit of advice.

She said “Make yourself indispensable”.

She must have given that advice to John, too, because he was completely indispensable to PBFM as well as, no doubt, all the other organisations with which he was associated.

John, as we all know, was a very quiet unassuming man with many hidden talents all of which we at the club came to know.

He ran the film competitions throughout the year under the odd title of Competitions Officer (internal), keeping the scores on record and entrants' positions in the 'league' table as well as the Annual Film of the Year competition, making sure we all had the chance to enter our productions, contacting outside judges, collecting and despatching the films, collating the judges' comments so everyone could have a copy, keeping the results secret and organising the return of the awards from the previous year, taking and collecting them from the engraver (no easy task as I know from having been his 'stand-in' this year!), collecting and cleaning them, printing the certificates and organising the 'gold' envelopes for the award ceremony at the annual dinner, taking all the awards to the annual dinner with the engraving kept secret until the presentation.

Then there's the Public Show. Although I have the title of 'Public Show Organiser' John was my 'right-hand man'. I chose the films and the running order, yes, but this was followed by me spending a large part of a day at John & Jeanne's 'overseeing' John as he downloaded all the films in order from various sources, putting them into his Avio together with suitable length black between each one plus intro, interval and end titles. They all had to download in 'real' time of course so you can see where the day went.

I then left John to copy the first & second half programmes onto 2 discs.

Before DVD's, when a lot of the films were either on VHS or mini DV tapes, John loaded them and played them 'live' at the Show....

Are you exhausted yet? I haven't finished.

At the Public Show he supervised the setting up of the projection system with yards of cables and a dimming light unit designed and built by himself. He even provided the black 'skirt' under the screen which he had saved from the 1940's blackout!

His calmness 'under fire' during the projection of the Public Show films was very reassuring.

By the time we had to project them for the second time for the evening show we were both

much more relaxed and able to enjoy a joke or two at the expense of some of the films!

As we know John was instrumental in getting us used to this 'new video projector' system, when it first crossed our doorstep. He understood it.

Later, together with John Astin, he supervised the buying of our own projector together with a suitable amplifier, loudspeakers, and cables etc.

So he became the Club projectionist on Competition nights and Inter-club competitions, coping with the many and varied formats with which he was presented.

If we had a request from a distant Club to send a PBFM Show reel John was the one that made up the programme especially for them and sent it off.

He embarked on the 2 Johns Shows where he and John Astin accepted bookings to give showings of our films to W.I's and other groups who enjoyed a full and entertaining show of movies. The club benefitted from these shows for which the 2 Johns charged.

Of course if PBFM were called upon to help stage some large event on behalf of North Thames Region of the IAC and needed to supply a good projection team it almost certainly involved John.

Then of course there was his enthusiastic involvement in making Club films. He organised the location for Triangle Productions 'The Way Forward' where he got permission for Angela, Penny & I, to use the Scout Hunt at Cuffley for the end scene.

More recently he was a valued member of the A Team where he worked mainly behind the scenes as continuity, technical advisor or sound man.

Only very recently was he persuaded to act in a short film, which he did brilliantly. The film didn't take long to film and we had time in the day left over to film another one so he appeared again in a one minute 'joke' film...once again giving a good performance as a prisoner!!

Obviously he made films of his own, a lot of which involved trains. If some famous steam train was coming through Cuffley or Potters Bar John would be there to record the occasion.

But he also made films involving his family, of which he was very proud, especially his daughter's twin girls who have grown up on film and are now very successful University students.

I haven't touched on his passion for collecting including a wonderful collection of cigarette cards so carefully kept in dedicated albums. Both he and Jeanne loved gardening and tending their large garden is no mean feat. One of his favourite things was film musicals.

He showed us his many other 'favourite things' in his Club night presentation of that title.

But one can't end this long list of John's passions without including the Boy Scout Movement. As I know very little about Boy Scouts other than they used to wear shorts (!) I cannot add much more than to say he received one of the highest accolades that a Scout Leader can receive. We used to wind him up a bit by referring to the scouts as 'dib dobs'!

There is now a great hole, no, chasm left by John's departure... If we feel it, then think how Jeanne and his family are feeling.... So, too late, I must say.....

....Thank you John for all your dedication and hard work.

But above all your great friendship....

.....

John Parkes 1932 - 2016

I remember at one of our “Two Johns” Shows when I was having trouble with some sticky tape: “John – I can’t cut this tape.”

“Don’t worry – I’ve got my trusty Swiss penknife here somewhere.”

That was John – always prepared, always so conscientious. A doer not a talker. The most reliable and hard-working of men, the very fulcrum of our video club.

John was enrolled as a member of Potters Bar Cine Society, as it was then, on August 30th 1986, just about thirty years ago.

Before long, he became the Competitions Officer, and, when the job was split into Internal & External Competition Officers, he took on the Internal job.

He didn’t just take it on – he took possession of it. He set up the equipment, brought together the tapes or DVDs that had been entered, handed out the mark sheets, read out the titles of the entries, projected the films, spent the whole of the coffee break adding up the marks, read out the winners’ names and presented the trophies which he personally had labelled.

And then the Film of the Year Competition – you wouldn’t credit all the work he did for that – even putting the winners’ names into individual gold envelopes to be read out, in Oscars style, on Presentation Night!

As for the annual Public Show, he collated all the films to be shown on to one DVD, and not only took care of the projection, but had already booked the hall, supplied the blackout, erected the screen and adorned it with flowers & lights!

It was in January 2000 that I volunteered to do a Video Show of Club films for the Lea Valley U3A. I asked John if he would be the projectionist. “The Two Johns” were born! Since then, we’ve done around 150 shows over 16 years, for all sorts of local community groups, and raised around £3,000 for the club coffers.

Until recently, he had hardly missed one, and in fact did several with Jeanne when I was unavailable.

I can’t remember anything ever going seriously wrong – John was always so careful, willing and so thorough; he always had a spare, he could always devise a way to overcome a minor problem.

The lynch-pin of our club, patient to a fault with everyone, always reluctant to hurt other people’s feelings, John was a fantastic club member – the very best - and he will be very, very sorely missed by everyone at Potters Bar FilmMakers.

We wish Jeanne and the family all the very best at this most difficult of times.

John Astin, August 2016

The Open Competition

This year's Open competition, took place on a very stormy evening, where some people had to experience thunder storms with heavy storms of rain, flooded homes and roads.

In spite of this there was quite a good turn out, with about 20 members attending. Unfortunately there were a very poor number of entries into what should have been a very undemanding category where anything is suitable.

There were only three entries, two from John Astin both were documentaries, in John's inimitable style, The third entry was a Story film from Ed Kinge, in which the cast was made up from P.B.F.M. members: - Ed himself, Jacques Wainwright, and Andrew Saunders.

It was a short story of a relative of a diamond heist who supposedly had just died in prison, and Ed himself set out to retrieve the hidden loot.

This movie was competently filmed, acted and edited. The sound quality was particularly good. The sound level of the speech was at a constant level with clear voices with an absence of wind noise, the Music accompaniment was kept at the right level and was well suited to the content of the story.

This was Ed's first attempt at producing a story movie, and the subsequent result does him credit. I myself am looking forward to his next production.

John's entry first entry was "Lumier London". This was attempting to cover night in the centre of London when a special display of Lights was occurring. This was a very difficult subject to film and John himself said that he was disappointed with the displays that were

staged, saying that they were nothing compared to the Blackpool illuminations. As a result although the event was well covered in John's interminable style, the pictures on the screen were not terribly exciting.

John's second entry was "Ups and Downs in Lisbon, and was a documentary in John's inimitable style, taking during a holiday in Portugal.

It began with a brief history of Lisbon, from the middle ages, at the time of a massive earthquake and tsunami, which occurred in the distant past which destroyed most of the city killing thousands of people. It's subsequent re-birth with beautiful streets and architecture. This was well photographed and the accompanying commentary was interesting and informative. The second part of the movie went on to describe how the people were able to get the help of the local transport service to overcome the very steep hills that form part of the City.

This section I found to be very interesting, when John revealed that the trams that were still in service had been negotiating the steep narrow streets since the early part of the century. John's commentary was both interesting and informative. However I found the Music accompaniment was a bit too punchy for my liking, though I must admit it was being played at too high a volume.

John won the competition and Ed came in second place. However Ed's DVD was so well received, it was suggested that we should enter it into the "North v South" competition this Year, where the theme is "Out of the Blue". Congratulations to Ed and his team for producing such an entertaining movie.

The Demonstration of Drone Flying

By Simon Beer at Production Gear premises.

On a pleasant July evening, we arrived at Wrotham Park Business Centre near Potters Bar, to be greeted by Simon and the staff of Production Gear. The company retail a wide variety of film equipment to both amateur and professional film makers from a converted Grade II Listed former Threshing Barn on the Byng Estate which houses an original 1850's Grasshopper beam driven steam/diesel engine (non-operational, sadly) and its drive shaft, which runs the length of the upper part of their building. We split into groups to give people the chance to fly drones and have a tour of the retail site.

The friendly and most enthusiastic staff showed us the specialist equipment that they sell, which included gimbals (sophisticated camera steadying equipment) for both movie cameras and android phones. We had chance to try these out, one was lightweight and easy to hold, the other heavier and designed for more professional movie use. The lightweight one even had a "selfie" setting, the camera head then automatically swivelled round to look at and film you!

Production Gear also retail products produced by an American company called "Wooden camera" that connect a wide variety of cameras rigidly to other pieces of film equipment. Also on show were powerful LED lights for filming, which allow both outdoor and indoor colour effects at the touch of a button.

Drones are a relatively cheap and easy solution for getting shots where a traditional large camera gantry or helicopters are not practical or safe to operate. They can carry "GoPro" type cameras and use iPads as a screen monitor. There are some very fine films made using this technology on YouTube, such as one shot around the

deserted city of Pripjat near the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant, which would not otherwise have been achievable.

The drones out on the field came in different sizes with between four and eight rotor blades on them. The smaller, white drone looked very neat but you needed to be simultaneously aware of both where it was in the sky, and what it was filming, which proved a bit tricky to master for us first time flyers! The larger drones could have a pilot to control the flight and a separate feed to monitor what the camera was filming, which seemed easier to manage.

The largest drone on display was about one metre in diameter and had red and green lights so that observers on the ground could tell which direction it was flying in. Once in the air, it suddenly took on the eerie appearance of one of the mother ship craft from the '70s film "Close encounters of the third kind"! The drone can hover up to 100 metres up, glide in any direction or move at speed across terrain while filming quite steadily. Several club members tried flying the drones and everyone was very impressed with their versatility and the smooth quality of the tracking shots they effortlessly provided, which would be ideal for following fast moving vehicles or landscape tracking shots.

Eventually dusk fell, and we reluctantly had to finish the session which had proved to be a great success as a visit, thanks to Edward for organising it and the enthusiastic participation of Simon and the staff from Production Gear who really enjoy working there!

Max Bender

Photographs of Drone Flying



Max Bender and Simon Beer
At the Controls of the Drones



PBFM Members waiting for the demonstration of
drones to begin.



Max showing great interest in a Drone



A large Drone ready for Take-off.



Ian Luetchford at the controls of a Professional
Steady Cam at Production Gear.



Some of the Professional Video equipment
On display at Production Gear

The Summer Garden

Party.

CAKES AND GOOD COMPANY.

By PENNY LOVE

When Ian and Norma invited us to join them in their lovely garden for afternoon tea in August they had to take a chance on what the weather would be like but no worries as it was a lovely sunny, though very windy, day.

Kim and Gill, and Edward and Rose, had arrived early to help Ian put the gazebos up and the tables and chairs out. There were about 20 of us and it was nice to see Daphne, all the way from the wilds of St Neots. (Molly, her little dog, decided she would sooner stay at home and snooze !!!).

Norma brought out a delicious selection of sandwiches, which didn't take long to all disappear, and the chatting got well under way. Cakes and scones came next, with as many cups of tea as you could drink, from a trusty urn set up by the shed. Perfect place for it as gave us a chance to have another wander round the garden on the way for a refill.



Andrew T was telling us about his cycling tour from Lands End to John 'O Groats but didn't say he was making arrangements for another one just yet !!! Barbara had enjoyed herself while he was away by doing lots of different things, including going to a performance of the Proms. She did say which one but it was all too 'highbrow' for me; I am more the Cliff Richard and Beatles music type person.

Ian and Norma's garden is huge and not a weed in sight. Apparently Ian does all the weeding and has even been known to pull up weeds when they have been out for a walk or on holiday..... (If he ever runs out of weeds there are plenty in my garden he is welcome to.....). I wonder how he feels about Ground Elder ??????

The time went much too quickly and once we had helped pack everything up, as a thank you for hosting the afternoon we gave them a rose bush called 'Somme 100'. This is a special rose grown in Belgium, to commemorate the 100 years anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, though where they would find a space to plant it I have no idea.

It really was a 'Cakes and Good Company' afternoon.

Photos taken at The Summer Garden Party.



A good time was had by all who attended the Garden Party on a sunny afternoon in August and they wish to thank Ian and Norma for their welcome to their lovely garden.

Video to a Record/Poem Competition held on Thursday 1st September 2016

The Winter Programme opened with the Video to a Record Competition and there was a good response from the members with Seen Videos entered. Max bender our newest Member is to be congratulated as he entered a Video of his holiday in Bols This way series of action just of the Sandy beach of Wing assisted Surf Boards of Power Boats and Pleasure Launches, all travelling about on the beautiful Blue Sea The Camera work was very steady and there were several long distant pans following the action, which came off well.. Max was the only Graduate member to enter this time, and he was followed by six other videos from advanced members.

The Winner of the section was Ed Kinge, with his entry Messing About On The River. As we have come to expect from Ed.s videos. It was full of beautifully composed shots which were fitted perfectly to the lyrics of the song, and was well worth first place amongst the other entries. Phil Elmer took second place with a very humorous video, filmed at Hilly Fields Enfield, in which the Character was filmed wandering through the Fields in tune with the song with a quite flamboyant action.

Ed Kinge's second entry Droning On, was place third in the Competition and as the Title indicates was a Video taken at the Drone Flying demonstration conduct by Simon Bee, which was reported about earlier in this news letter.

Below are the Results of the Video to a Record/Poem Competition

Video to a Record/Poem	Appeal 30%	Photo 20%	Sound 20%	Edit 20%	Titling 10%	Total 100%	Position 100%	FOY Points
Messing About on the River Ed Kinge	25.23	17.31	18.00	16.46	9.54	83,54	1	
The Happy Wanderer Phil Elmer	23	15.42	16	14.78	8.58	77.75	2	
Droning On Ed Kinge	22.08	16.08	15.5	15	8.58	77.25	3	
Joy Ride Andrew Tweed	22.67	16.33	15.25	15.25	8.33	71.85	4	
Car Song Ed Kinge	18.85	14.85	13.69	13.31 2	8.38	69.08	5	
Space Odyssey Andrew Saunders	17.91	13.45	14,38	13.36	7.27	67.00	6	
Bol Max Bender (Graduate)	21.09	14.82	14.73	12	7.64	70'27	1	

More Sad News .

I was very sorry to receive an e-mail from Monica Polins to say that Len had passed away in July. She had immediately flown to America where the family live and only returned in late August and contacted me then.

Len had been on oxygen for some time and the last time we saw him was at the Dinner in 2015. When I visited him in April this year he said he wanted to come to the Dinner but it transpired he wasn't well enough. Penny has sent a card from us all..

Bob Chester.

Proposed Plan to get New Members

Dozens of column inches are given over to the dwindling memberships of IAC club's. Potters Bar FilmMakers are lucky to have the very able publicity officer who recently arranged two successful promotions. One at the local Tesco store and another with a stand at the Potters Bar Carnival. A good number of new member enquires were received, several of which were either from, or on behalf of, young people. None of the youngsters followed up.

With this in mind, one of our club members put forward the idea of opening a junior section.

Here are just some of the thoughts that our committee discussed, I'll leave you to your own conclusions:

- What should be the target age range?
- Safe Guarding: Responsible adult to accompany each child or DBS checks (formally CRB)?
- Timing and regularity of meetings. (The assumption was made that attending our present fortnightly club night is not an option).
- What is it we can offer that would supplement the work of school media departments?
- Film Making Club or Film Making School?
- Structure of club sessions. How do we offer the 'instant' rewards required to maintain the enthusiasm of young minds?
- Do we have the skills and commitment amongst our membership to set up, run and maintain what is effectively a new club?
- Technology????
- How do you make the initial junior membership numbers viable from a standing start?
- Retention. How do you mitigate against losing junior members as they come across other attractions/distractions?

This is by no means an exhaustive list but is sufficient to open wider debate plus it prompts some questions about how far IAC club members are willing to push at their boundaries.

Yes we want new members, but if we are honest with ourselves the vast majority of members we are quite happy with the way things are. We don't really want to stray far from our comfort zone. New members are very welcome as long as they are a bit like us - only younger!

Our Chairman Andrew Tweed (second from the left)
and his friends
on their arrival in Scotland during a
Charity Cycle Ride from
Lands End to John O’Groats



Subject: THE BRITISH PENNY

his is EUROPEAN UNION DIRECTIVE - **NO. 456179/16**

IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT FURTHER INTEGRATION WITH THE SINGLE EUROPEAN CURRENCY(THE "EURO") ALL CITIZENS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND MUST BE MADE AWARE THAT THE PHRASE "**SPENDING A PENNY**" must **NOT BE USED** AFTER 30th MARCH 2016.

AS FROM 1st May 2016,

THE CORRECT TERM WILL BE "EURONATING".

IT IS HOPED THAT THIS WILL BE A GREAT **RELIEF** TO EVERYONE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS JUST GIVE ME A **TINKLE.**

Distribution Dates for Next News Letter.

Please send your Articles or Comments for inclusion

In the next Newsletter to:-

The PBFM Editor – Ron Jones FACI

By the dates listed below:-

The Christmas News Letter	Last dates for Hard Copy Input to the editor	17th Nov
The Christmas News Letter	Last dates for e-mail Contributions by e-mail	24th Nov
The Christmas News Letter	<i>e-mail Distribution Dates.</i>	<i>1st. Dec</i>
The Christmas News Letter	HARD Copy Distribution Dates	8th, Dec