

Potters Bar FilmMakers

The Video Club for East Herts.

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



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Spring Newsletter 2017

Affiliated Member



The Film & Video Institute
North Thames Region

meeting was cancelled and the Showing of the Programme of will be shown at a later date.

The Variable Subject Competition.

There were three entrants in this competition which took place on the 26th January, in which the subject was 'Portrait'. The first shown was a record of Andrew Tweed's Video which was a record of his Cycle Ride from Lands End to John o'Groats. This was shot on a GoPro Hero Camera and included some very good footage. Though it was a pity that some of the images were spoilt by parts of the Cycle equipment obstructing the image.

John Astin's entry was next and was a video that took us on a journey around a coastal bay on the North Coast of France. This was a typical example which showed John's skill at providing a well scripted commentary. It was full of interesting information and delivered in John's inimitable way. However the subject was of more interest to railway enthusiasts, than it was to a normal viewing audience.

The Final entry Portrait of Frank was from Andrew Saunders and was entered as a graduate entry. It was the only video in the competition that really fitted the Theme 'Portrait' that had been the subject that the videos were meant to comply. It was a valiant attempt to imitate Frank Sinatra performing one of his hit recordings. However I felt the blank expression on the mask that was worn, that did not work in the attempt to impersonate the Star.

The results were: 1st (Advanced) -John Astin, The Railway Round The Bay, 84%

2nd - Andrew Tweed, Great Britain, 65%

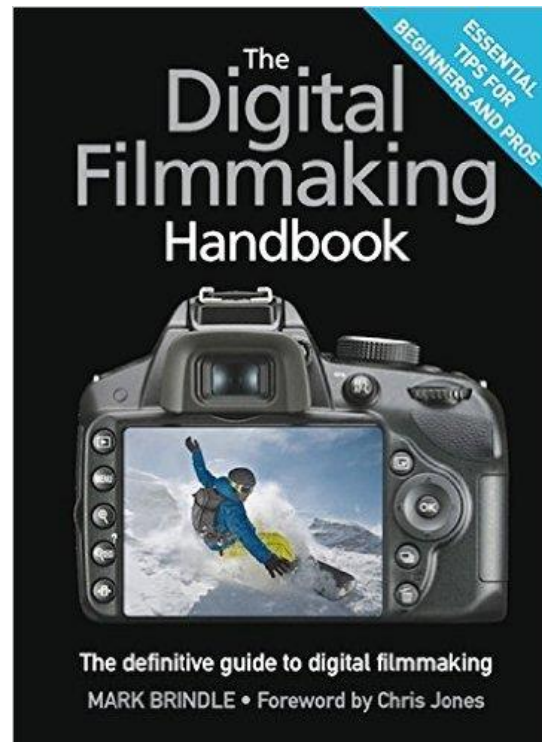
3rd - Andrew Saunders, Portrait of Frank, 57%

Script writing evening

The club evening on Thursday 9th February was given over to a script writing workshop. The aim was to work together in small groups to plan and produce a first draft storyboard for a short film that each group could produce during this year.

A number of members came with ideas and we grouped together and discussed what we had brought along. Each group then selected the idea they felt would be practical and fun to produce. They developed the idea and began to think about the scenes and locations they might use, props and casting.

We then shared our ideas with everyone and general feedback was given along with suggestions to enhance each group's film. It was an enjoyable and very useful evening that involved everyone present and the outcome should be several more group films made by members of Potters Bar Filmmakers over the coming year.



Max Bender.

ODE ODD ODE ODD ODE A PENNY LOVE

Two competitions at once this time
To make into a little rhyme
The 'unclassified' first came along
Four entries with subjects very strong.

THE SECRET ISLAND first from **JOHN A**
Showing us where he spent the day
In Waltham Abbey at The Gunpowder
Mills
Lucky for us there weren't any spills.

From **LEA VALLEY TO LONDON ED**
KINGE went
Some leisurely time on a boat he
spent
He saw dogs on bridges, Swans and
locks
Nice and calm with no need for clocks.

DOMINIC showed us Hearing Dogs
TRAINING
In weather good and sometimes
raining
A brown Labrador named Norton, was
bright
With special treats when he did things
right.

A HORSE COBBLER then **DOMINIC**
found
Something unusual while travelling
around
Shoeing horses and filing hooves

Watch out for 'big feet' when the
horse moves.

'The Variable' comp was **PORTRAIT**
this year

A difficult subject, so only three
entries I fear

Well done entrants for making a film
this time

Else I would have had to shorten this
rhyme.

ANDREW TWEED'S BRITAIN was first
on screen

On a 1000 miles bike ride he had been
With his camera strapped to his bike
each day

He showed us fantastic scenery along
the way.

PORTRAIT OF FRANK from **ANDREW**
SAUNDERS in a mask

A tribute to Frank Sinatra, what more
could we ask.

A record playing a well known song
With Andrew miming right along.

Then a train film from **JOHN A**

Titled **RAILWAY ROUND THE BAY**

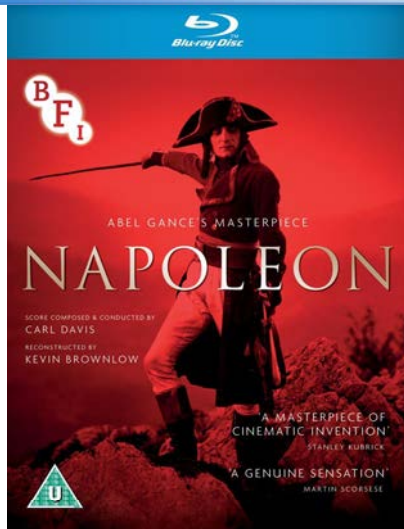
Filmed in France we saw a detailed
map

But where was John, and does he have
a rail mans cap ??

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Abel Gance's classic film



1927, an epic film was released by the remarkable French director Abel Gance. "Napoleon" had taken two years to film and ran vastly over budget. The complete version ran for seven hours. It was to have been the first part of a series of six films, telling the life story of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Many innovative techniques were used to make the film, including fast cutting, extensive close-ups, a wide variety of hand-held camera shots, location shooting, point of view shots, multiple-camera setups, multiple exposure, superimposition, underwater camera, kaleidoscopic images, film tinting, split screen and mosaic shots. Perhaps the most striking is the multi-screen projection of the triptych finale to create the first wide screen film.

Sadly, the film was drastically cut and the most creative parts removed before it was shown internationally. It received indifferent reviews and disappeared. That could have been the end of the film but for UK film historian Kevin Brownlow. As a teenager, he saw a part of the film as a silent 8mm print and realised it was a missing masterpiece of cinema history. He later met with both Abel Gance and Albert Dieudonne, who played the lead, and set about collecting together and restoring the film to as near the original as possible.



It has taken many years work of restoration, supported by the British Film Institute, and some parts are still missing, but the film again now looks as the director intended. Composer Carl Davies has created a new score to be played live during the five hour performance and it was shown again at the Royal Festival Hall last November. It was a spectacular day of cinema history and the audience cheered and stood to applaud at the end. I was fortunate to be there and to meet both Kevin Brownlow and Carl Davies after the performance.

Kevin has released a very well-illustrated book telling the story of the making of "Napoleon" and its restoration and including a CD of the Carl Davis score.

Max Bender

Light Angle by Ed Kinge

workshop on the subject of Photography for Film Making. This will cover some technical points - focal length, control of depth of field etc. but mostly it will be about composition and what that word really means.

This will involve some input from me and a great deal of participation and discussion from all of you. In preparation for this workshop I would like as many as possible of you to carry out the following exercise

Visit, ideally more than once, an accessible location where you are allowed to film e.g. - local park, churchyard, high street, market etc. With no specific genre in mind, uses short clips and concentrate on exploring what composition means to you through a range of familiar shots;

Establishing shot

Long

Medium

Close up

These can be stills, and be shots exploring camera / subject movement, selective / changing focus, different focal lengths, viewpoints etc. Using a tripod where appropriate and knowing your camera's technical possibilities will help greatly.

Notice how weather and time of day can alter results - shadows especially can be made to play an important part. Expect to get lucky and you will.

I'm only looking for a maximum total filming of about three minutes per person (it can be less) so it shouldn't be too demanding - if you've got a camera have a go, even if you don't usually make club films.

Avoid researching 'rules' of composition - concentrate on observing, thinking, testing, and exploring. Spend time looking at your first results before a return visit if you can see ways of improving them. If you believe a shot is successful, i.e. pleasing, see if you can put this into words and explain why you like it. The essential guideline for good photography - spend 90% of the time in looking, 10% in doing.

Bring your results to the workshop on a DVD or a USB memory stick. The evening will only work with your active involvement so please make the effort.

Ed Kinge



**POTTERS BAR
FILMMAKERS ANNUAL
DINNER AND AWARDS
EVENING.**

**THURSDAY
18TH MAY 2017
7pm for 7.30pm
IN THE OLD MANOR
RESTAURANT.**

**FOLLOWED BY THE
AWARDS PRESENTATIONS IN THE ALEXANDER
WILDING ROOM IN THE WYLLYOTTS CENTRE AT
9.30PM.**

TICKETS £28.50 EACH.

**Make a note in your diary now so that you don't miss
this spectacular event, and who knows, you may be the
one collecting the coveted Film of the Year award.**

**Friends and family are welcome to join us, (as long as
they have a ticket of course), so ask Penny to add you
to the list.**

**The menu for your choice of a starter, main course and
dessert will be available nearer the time.**

James Region 100 Club.

100 Club. This is a monthly draw lottery whereby for only
month of winning £12.00.

In January and February Potters Bar Members and the Club won 5 yes 5 of the 8 prizes!

Now here is a special offer:- If you join or buy an extra number in March then it will only cost you £10.00 for the whole year. YES just £10.00. and you get to choose your number from the few remaining available.

E-Mail me now on robertalanchester@yahoo.co.uk

An evening with John Astin.

On the 23rd of February our Club members gathered to hear a talk by John Astin described how he went about making his documentary videos. He began by saying that:-

That he was looking to have a few days away in September, and that he decided to make his next project a documentary the covering of an excellent little railway in Normandy the Baie de la Somme.

He began his talk by saying that the very first thing that he does is to look up his subject on the Internet to gather as much information about the intended subject as he could. So checking on their website, and downloaded the timetable. He then bought a book on the railway on Amazon.

He said that researching your intended subject before you embark on it, is of the utmost importance.

He spent Saturday & Sunday on the railway, and returned Monday evening, spending the Monday morning & early afternoon looking round the towns of Cayeux, Le Crotoy & St Valery.

Saturday morning he went to St Valery Station and bought a guide book. Unfortunately it rained in the morning and poured down in the afternoon! Saturday was more or less a washout and as he reconnoitred the railway looking for best camera angles, the guide book got soaked! Much of material shot on Saturday was shot again on Sunday, when the weather was much kinder, and much of Saturday's shots were discounted in the final edit, concentrating on the material shot on Sunday & Monday.

Over the three days he took 517 clips, which was very roughly 2 hours of material which was edited down to 12 minutes in the final edit of 'The Railway Round the Bay'.

With a railway film, planning is inevitably involved, because it is necessary travel the return journey on all three routes, and also be in the right place at the right time for line side shots.

Having read the book & the guidebook, one can build up ones mind and a list of points that one wants to make about the railway. Then filming everything of interests and is essential to tell the story.

Decisions are made to make a point, such as the purpose of the canal; Ensure that you have got several shots from varying view points. Having lots of shots of the same place (or whatever) is essential for maintaining pace in editing. Think L/Ss, M/Ss, and C/Us, all the time.

In fact, always think about editing during the filming, and in particular try to ensure that lots of cutaways of spectators etc. so that long (potentially boring) actions can be substantially shortened. Also, think sound. Try to use a location where there are no loud sounds that are irrelevant to the images, e.g. a mountain accompanied with traffic noise. In a train, record around a minute's worth of the train in motion, which can be used if any of my visually essential shots are ruined by fellow travellers chatting etc.

Think points to make and have sufficient key images to illustrate them.

Any well made film can be divided into chapters. and gradually, a film structure emerges, and many of a well edited film will morph into the sort of structure. I.e. a preamble, an introduction, a succession of key points a well illustrated, a summing up and/or conclusion.

Continued overleaf

being watched by people who have chosen to go and see it for
ld, a film is being watched because someone wanted to make
osen to watch it.

films boring - we weren't interested in the subject matter to
structed in a way to hold their interest.

If we filmmakers are going to expect a general audience to enjoy our films, we need to do all that we can to make them enjoyable. Length is an issue. How long is it reasonable to expect a general audience to stick with a film about a French narrow-gauge railway if they're not interested in railways? 12 minutes is probably at the top end, and the original material is cut considerably with the definite intention to reduce the finished length to 12 minutes.

A general audience wouldn't want boring technical stuff read out of a guidebook and do not include technical details in the film, the sort of locos & their history, for example!!

So how do you go about trying to keep a film as short as possible?

First look at every clip before putting it in, and ask yourself what it adds to the film.

When adding any new visual information that hasn't previously been covered? Is it really needed? Be really rigorous in the editing. Decide what it is essential, and play it until you think it's been on long enough, and then cut it. Pace is essential. Normally each normal clip would be 3 or 4 seconds long, so a 12 second piece of voiceover would need 3 or 4 different illustrative clips. Returning to what was said earlier; think of this when you're filming. If you haven't got a variety of different clips, you can't use them. Then, you either have one clip on the screen for far too long ó boring ó or your voiceover spills over on to unrelated and irrelevant clips.

So, the basic requirement of a film is to involve the audience ó grasp its attention, and keep it throughout. To keep the audience's attention when editing, we have at our disposal four layers of a film i.e. The images, the live ambient sound, the addition of music and the voiceover you always want at least two of these four layers of a film to be involving the audience.

Too many amateur films just show a succession of shots of a river, for example ó they'll probably be unsteady and poorly framed! These will NOT engage an audience on their own. Add some appropriate & attractive music, and cut the clips to the music, and, if they're really good clips, the images & the music might just engage an audience, though, probably, not for long.

SURELY THE ONLY REAL WAY IS TO ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE FOR SOME TIME IS THROUGH THEIR MIND, BY ENGAGING THEIR INTELLECT.

A comparison - at the gym, one can get on the bicycle and watch the TV screen in front of them ó Wanted Down Under, Bargain Hunt, Homes under the Hammer, or whatever, you get involved in the programme your mind gets carried away, suddenly you've been cycling for half an hour without realising it!


That's surely what we need to do as amateur filmmakers. Don't just show - engage the brain. Have a structure, make the voiceover clear, ensure points are well illustrated, underline moods, thoughts, ideas with music, and lead the film through on a clear, easily followable path to a suitable conclusion. It's such a compliment when people say of films ó well, it was 12 minutes, but it felt like 5!! Whist with some well edited films; it seems the other way round!

So, when editing following the structure, and at the same time on a laptop write the voiceover, making the points clearly, ensuring at this stage that the length of time it takes to read out the words and they match the length of the appropriate relevant clips.

When you put together the whole sequence of clips, if a clip is longer than 12 minutes, consider where it can be altered or removed, this may also usually mean rewriting part of the voiceover. Then adjust the live sound track. then record the voiceover, and lay it on its own dedicated timeline track. This will often involve lengthening or shorting clips to match the length of the words.

Adjust the live sound so that the voiceover is not drowned out and consider which sequences in the film need and/or would profit from music. As hinted earlier, any sequences where there was only unremarkable live sound with the visuals would get music, as would voiceover map sections.

John Astin, February 2017



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Productions Latest News.

MOONLIGHT'S latest production is well underway.
We were out shooting in the cold but sunny morning of March 2nd and we saw the fantastic rushes on returning to Christine's home. Editing and sound tracking will take place shortly and then you can look forward to seeing the first of many award wining productions.



Christine, Penny, Max, Phil and Bob.

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:-

<u>The Summer News Letter</u>	<u>Last dates for Hard Copy Input to</u>	<u>31st May</u>
<u>Summer News Letter</u>	<u>Last dates for e-mail Contributions by e-mail</u>	<u>7th. June.</u>
<u>The Summer News Letter</u>	<u>e-mail Distribution Dates.</u>	<u>14th. June.</u>
<u>The Summer News Letter</u>	<u>HARD Copy Distribution Dates</u>	<u>21st. June.</u>