



# HARROW CINE & VIDEO SOCIETY

[www.harrowcinevideo.org.uk](http://www.harrowcinevideo.org.uk)

## NEWS AND VIEWS

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### HCVS Summer Lunch



Members assemble and order drinks before lunch



Reading the Newsletter while awaiting lunch



The novel but useful box layout of the tables

Our Summer Lunch this year was held on Friday 19th July at a new venue for the Society. This was "The Hare" at Old Redding, Harrow Weald and was well attended. The members enjoyed the excellent service, imaginative layout of the tables and the well presented food that they had to offer. The only criticism was that the seating was far too crowded with dining places far too close together. The general opinion seemed to be that we would like to come back next year if the seating arrangements could be spaced out better.



Ken Mills has a few words at the end of the lunch

# Ealing Video and Film Makers' Showreel

by David Hughes

Our new autumn term began with a showreel from Ealing, and I couldn't help but reflect how things have changed over the years. Once upon a time (are you sitting comfortably?) a group of Ealing members lead by the late Norman Blackburn FACI would have arrived early, set up their film projectors and we would have seen the films the way their makers intended. Now, with changed technology, we get the entire evening on a disc or two, no makers to quiz or compliment, and an annoying visual spoiler proclaiming club ownership, superimposed on the image. Not just at the beginning and maybe the end of each production but throughout. Think of an audio recording with a steady 1 KHz tone inserted and you'll understand why I consider it audience-unfriendly. I understand the desire to prevent piracy of your movie but surely there has to be a better way to deter miscreants? Other clubs seem to manage without this intrusion.

As usual when viewing another club's showreel, we put the lights up when the movie finishes, discuss what we've just seen and send the notes from this discourse to the club concerned. It's always interesting for any club to know what other movie makers think of their output and such discussion is always freer when the makers aren't listening.

In the following, actual comments made after each movie have quotation marks, and anything else is paraphrased. I don't guarantee that this is the actual running order as my notes became mixed up.

## **Baby Odessa** (4½ mins)

This was a 'remake' of sorts, complete with pram, of the Odessa Steps sequence from the film *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR 1925) and originated on film, evident from the strobing on a DIY transfer to video. It attracted the comments "I thought it was good", "There were too many red herrings there" (given the Soviet connection, what did you expect?) and "Nice music".

## **Bluebell** (5½ mins)

Yes, the Bluebell Railway in Sussex, possibly one of the most photographed attractions over the decades, certainly by movie makers. "No plot, no story" came one comment, closely followed by "No people" (not strictly true but near enough) and "Should have been a lot more on the trains, less on the posters". The music – *Little Red Rooster* – came from the Rolling Stones' first album.

## **Lunch Break** (5 mins)

A story film from 2004 (calendar on the travel agent's wall) of a man with rather specific requirements trying to book a holiday for two at impossibly short notice. Of course it didn't help that the second holiday-maker wasn't there to help him decide. Apart from a comment on the audibility of the travel agent, this was one of those movies where the ending was so well known to the movie makers that it remains a mystery to the audience – our audience, anyway. "I didn't quite get the end", "What happened at the end?", "Nobody knows!", "Did anybody get the ending?", "No" – "No". A short pause, then someone offered "It promised a lot, but it was a disappointment at the end."

Alas, most clubs have made one of these, and HCVS is no exception. (It was a long time ago, mind.....) The director is so familiar with the background to the story that they forget that the audience is not.

## **Arctic Adventure** (14½ mins)

The second longest movie was one that made you wonder why holiday films have such a bad reputation. Opening with an excellent main title and complete with good use of maps, only two repeat shots jarred but the non-tripod camerawork was commendably steady and well framed with just a rare tilt to the horizon to satisfy those determined to find fault. The music (identified by one member as being by Grieg) sat comfortably in the soundtrack but I wouldn't have wanted it any higher in the mix during the

commentary. Observations included "I thought it was well researched and well put together" and "It was atmospheric – good commentary – not too much".

#### **False Alarm** (3½ mins)

Not quite the shortest movie in the programme, this was made as a 'Triangle' (North Thames IAC) competition entry. I cannot remember what it was about. My notes do mention an on-screen shadow cast by the crew (but even professionals do that), comments included "It's a bit predictable; the acting's a bit wooden" and the rather more complimentary "A good club film" and "It got the club together".

#### **A Day With The Deer** (2½ mins)

This, about deer in the park, was the shortest movie and as one member said, "It didn't outstay its welcome" even if another observed that "the music ended a little abruptly." Others thought that "It fitted the title", was "Very colourful" and contained "Some lovely shots".

#### **Napier** (7½ mins)

Napier is in New Zealand and the location of a classic car meet, so you might have expected a documentary but as one member opined, this production was not sure whether it was a documentary or a home movie. The latter would explain the comment that although there was human interest, there was "Too much wife".

Viewers of holiday movies made by strangers soon learn how to identify the movie-makers wife; she's the lady who appears most often. *Experienced* viewers recognise the movie-maker himself; he's the one who appears in the "Sometimes jerky and indeterminate" camerawork. Easy when you know how! In addition to "Some superfluous shots", many of the car shots were "Not held long enough" and "There were not enough close-ups of the cars." "It hops from one thing to the next" someone else added, and yet another regretted that "It could have been nice."

Many members "Couldn't understand much of the speech" on the "Sometimes

ragged" soundtrack, which contained "Some good music."

#### **The Chairman** (5 mins)

Another 'Triangle' entry, this comedy majored on the notion of 'Better the devil you know', as disgruntled movie-maker club members battled with a stuck-in-the-past chairman, only to regret their choice of successor. Although the movie suffered from hum on some parts of the sound track (same camera position) one member commented "We could hear every word", and the enthusiasm continued with "A noble effort", finishing with the one-word tribute "Entertainment !"

#### **The Green Boys Alien Band** (4 mins)

Wow. Very popular, this musical item, with a self-descriptive title. "An amazing film – whether you liked it or not." One member who had reservations said that it was "A bit jerky in places" whilst another added that the Ealing ownership spoiler (with us throughout the evening) was "Very distracting". Nevertheless (the spoiler is hardly the movie-maker's fault), it was considered "Thoroughly enjoyable" and "A fantastic piece of film-making."

#### **Fallen Leaves** (15 mins)

If ever you wanted to show an amateur movie to demonstrate that, these days, the only difference between an amateur and professional movie-maker can be that the pro gets paid, this "Outstanding" production is all the evidence you need. With "Well written dialogue" and "Excellent acting", this is a tale of a family where the husband and father is a soldier whose life is squandered on the anvil of some career politician's vanity war.

In lesser hands it would have been mawkish, but this was masterful. "Very, very professional" said one member; a second added "That was brilliant", and a third spoke for us all when he said "You saved the best until last."

A memorable beginning to what promises to be a memorable season. Thank you, Ealing. Norman Blackburn, one-time Ealing President, would have been proud.

# An Evening of Films from Ludwig Levy's Library

by Richard Lawrence

Aivar Kaulins introduced Ludwig Levy, who has been a prolific film maker and traveller. Ludwig said we were about to see a number of his films, some of which were 20 years old and he apologised in advance that one or two of them had some sound issues.

Ludwig's films covered a range of topics from films about animals and children, travelogues, documentaries, and mini dramas. His wonderful sense of humour often enhanced the commentaries that accompanied his films. This was also evident in the titles that he gave to his films.

The following short descriptions of his films serve to remind us of an entertaining evening that we all enjoyed:

**Cats:** This film was shot in Spiegel Park in Tel Aviv and told the story of why so many domestic cats inhabited this park. It turned out the cats had a benefactor in the form of a lady who looked after them and fed them daily. Despite the fact that Ludwig and this lady had no common language, they managed to communicate using odd words of Yiddish.

**New Orleans:** This travelogue charted a visit to New Orleans with particular emphasis on the jazz scene. Many careful and unusual shots of jazz players combine to make this an enjoyable film.

**A Gamblers Paradise:** This film was shot in the playground of Monaco and cleverly illustrated how those who live and visit this tax haven enjoy life to the full. Ludwig commented he would have liked to have stayed at the Hotel de Paris! The film also encompassed the Japanese garden and Castle Hill - the so-called 'poor' area.

**A Taste of China;** The film commenced with a duologue between Ludwig and his

wife about the cost of visiting China, and solved the problem by using their bus passes to visit London's Chinatown instead. The film provided an interesting study of the people living and working in Chinatown, a visit to the Chinese food stores in Gerard Street and a record of the Chinese New Year celebrations in 2005.

**Children International:** This film was a study of children from different cultures and included children from as far away as Madagascar, Vietnam and China. Ludwig certainly made the best use of some very willing participants to make a compelling film about children from around the world.

**The Canal:** This film documented the passage of the Holland America cruise ship the Stattendam as it navigated the Panama Canal on its nine-hour trip to the Pacific. It also included film of the Panamanian dancers who came aboard to entertain the passengers whilst the ship transited the Canal.

**The Shipbuilder:** An amusing film documenting the hobby activities of George, the owner of Ludwig's barber in Hendon. Besides providing Ludwig with his regular 'short back and sides' George builds model ship replicas in the workroom at the back of his barber shop. He allowed Ludwig to film the construction of a Roman Galleon over several months and a number of haircuts in between.

**British Gas with a Nine:** This film was a comedy drama and highlighted what could happen if one miss-dialled a telephone number. Unfortunately, Ludwig's attempt to rekindle romance with Rosamund, a college sweetheart, did not succeed in this case. Perhaps he should have stuck to dialling 8 for British Gas rather than a 9!



**Cuban Rhapsody:** This film, made in 2000, was a look at life in Havana, Cuba. There were graphic illustrations of food queues, what the locals thought of Castro and the benefits or maybe not, of a free health service and education.

**Berlin Revisited:** In this detailed and interesting documentary Ludwig recorded a revisit to Berlin, his home for 11 years until 1936. Not only did the film cover the significant changes to his home city, but included events going on at the time of his revisit including a demonstration about the Iran elections.

**Shop till You Drop:** This little documentary illustrated the changes in our shopping habits. The film centred around the shops in the Brent Cross shopping centre covering a Christmas period and the New Year sales.

This was a most enjoyable evening of films made by an accomplished film maker. Despite the age of some of the films, the video quality was impressive. The clever use of camera angles and the amusing commentaries made these films extremely watchable. Certainly this reviewer took away a number of useful tips for improving his films.

## **Working With Actors**

**by Tommy Kovacs**

What a brilliant evening. Celine Terranova's talk on how to manage actors and to bring three examples to her talk was an excellent idea. Having the actors there to emphasise some of the points Celine made, added an extra measure of reality to the presentation. David Forde and Anna Fiertag are already professionals in the acting business while Helen Wilkes is waiting for her big break. The actors introduced themselves generating lots of questions from the audience. We are very pleased that David, Anna and Helen came to see us and so generously gave up their evening for us.

Celine began by throwing light on the problem of finding actors that actually can act. We have all seen club productions where a good story well filmed was ruined by awful acting. Her recommendation is to seek out local theatre companies and find willing members who pose a modicum of talent. Sometimes advertising in the trade papers can throw up well known professionals volunteering for interesting projects.

When one is lucky and has several applicants for a non paying engagement, it will be necessary to select a short list of the appropriate set of people for the roles. It will be time consuming but saves time later. The next is to arrange for selection interviews. The casting process would require the actors to give a short monologue of their choice for the Director to assess the voice and personality of the applicants for the part. It would also be helpful to make the actors read from the script to assess how the person would give life to the character.

Rehearsals form the central aspect of the whole process. This is where the actors learn

to interact with the Director and other cast members. It is at this stage when the project becomes real and alive. It normally starts with group reading so that all participants understand the characters they are supposed to play.

This is also that stage in the development of the project that actors understand the Director and Script Writer's vision for the characterisation of the story. Rehearsals are the place and time to weld the acting and production teams into one purposeful unit. Sometimes actors need a strong direction to meet the Director's expectation for the role. Other times a creative approach from the actor could provide additional colour to the role. The Director needs to be aware of all the nuances that are required for handling sensitive actors. The final acting stage is of course the filming of the project. This is when time is no longer a luxury. Locations are not available ad infinitum, camera and lighting staff want to do the job and go home and the actors don't want to do endless retakes. To do it properly the Director must show in equal measure his authority and sensitivity to problems. With all that is happening at the same time, a good Director need to focus on the actors and maintain communication and feedback. In other words, maintain a professional environment in which creativity can thrive. The evening was studded with comments and contributions from the visiting actors as well as from the floor. In conclusion Celine showed her film: Sherlock Holmes and the Stolen Emerald.

# A Visit from John Astin

By Judy Long

We all know what an entertaining and informative speaker John Astin is, and his visit to the club on 23rd September was no exception.

John introduced his programme - all but one Blu-Rays, all shot on his Panasonic S0900 camera and edited on Edius. He then showed us a selection of his videos, and commented on them, giving us tips and advice on how to make good films, interspersed with anecdotes about video making. As we have come to expect, all his films were of wonderful quality and beautifully edited with a natural and informative voiceover where appropriate.

The first video was 'Anglesey Abbey', a film of the gardens in autumn, shot during the day and illuminated during the evening. It had been necessary to switch to manual to maintain the colour for shots of illuminations at night. This applies also to firework shots, where otherwise all lights may appear white.

'Moment to Shine' was a film about a friend of John's who had been a torch bearer for the Olympics. The film was a shorter version of a 20 min video John had made for the torch bearer himself, since the longer version would not have been interesting enough for the general public.

'A Heap of Cinders' was a fascinating travelogue of the volcanic island of Lanzarote. John likes to use maps to explain locations. Maps on Wikipedia tell you whether or not they are copyright. For this video he cloned out the island on Photoshop and then faded it back in.

'70 Degrees North' featured a three day boat trip around the most northerly coast of Norway. It gave us shots of the ship, the coastal towns where the ship stopped, and the stunning scenery. John explained how he had arranged the sequence artistically rather than chronologically in order to build up to the highlight of the trip and the most stunning shots, ie the visit to the Northern Cape. He also emphasised the importance of the commentary to link sections and maintain interest.

Up the Shard! took us through airport-like security and 1000' up to spectacular views over iconic buildings in London and beyond. He explained how it had been a dull day, so in the editing he had enhanced the colours and contrast. He also mentioned the need to get right up against the glass when shooting through windows in order to avoid reflections, and the need to be close to the person talking when using the on-board microphone.

We recaptured the spirit of the Olympics while watching 'Olympic London', a real feel-good movie shot over three days in the Olympic Park and around London. Some slick editing kept up the pace and the excitement.

John said that he rarely uses a tripod, but relies on standing up against e.g. a wall, putting the camera on a surface, and on the use of Mercalli stabilising software in editing, which you can read about on our website.

He next showed his promotional video for the Lea Valley U3A. He explained how he had planned and structured it, with tributes from individual members, shots of different groups, and of the monthly meetings, a list of the groups scrolling across the bottom of the screen, then back to individual members; and he talked about the use of wireless tie-mikes. Copyright-free music from AKM, which can be purchased by track or by CD was used for this film.

Talking generally he also mentioned how individual clips should be kept short. For example a 12 second voiceover is better accompanied by 3 four second shots than with one 12 second shot. It is vital to be strict in the editing. Each shot must add something to a video. You don't have to put it in the video just because you shot it - if it doesn't fit, or is repetitive, don't use it!

Altogether a most entertaining and useful talk - packed full of great videos and practical tips. Our thanks once again to John for a memorable evening.

# An Evening With Southport MovieMakers

By Wallace Jacobs

Southport Movie Makers were kind enough to send us two discs containing their showreel for 2012.

We had a very entertaining evening on 30<sup>th</sup> September and as is our normal practice we stopped after each film to ask the audience their views on all aspects of the film. We were delighted that each film was a story film. The films were :

**Night Vision. 10 minutes.** The story involved a film crew going into the woods at nighttime and three of the crew disappearing. The rest of the crew went to look for them and instead found an empty building and inside the three missing members dressed as druid praying, very ghostly. They fled to the police who did not believe their story and their search could not find the building or the missing men. A good mystery story.

**Bringing the House Down. 8 minutes.** A very unlikely story of two men from a company called Calapspso calling on an affluent couple in a very large house and persuading them to have their house blown up. A very unlikely story with some acting which was not up to standard.

**Incident in a Red House. 5 minutes.** A young women wanders into a gazebo, sits down and listens to the radio. The story on the radio is about someone who has escaped from a secure unit and was on the run, reported as dangerous. A short while later a

very dishevelled man walks into the gazebo and the girl becomes very frightened. The scene changes and we see two uniformed men searching when the young girl walks into the scene and is persuaded by the uniformed men to return to the asylum from where she had escaped. We switch back to the gazebo where we see the dishevelled man dead with large shears plunged into his throat. A very good surprising switch.

**Another Place. 6 minutes.** This film provided the most comment from the audience from "meaningless" to "what a very good film."

**The Wargame. 19 minutes.** Taking us back to war torn Holland through the eyes of a young boy. Many twists and turns. This film was enjoyed by everyone in the audience and rated very highly for its content, and acting.

**The Will. 16 minutes.** Another very good story film from Southport Movie Makers. All about a will and its beneficiaries. Very good plot and backed up with realistic characters. Liked very much by the audience.

**The Hypnotist 6 minutes** He wants to stop smoking, so he visits a hypnotist. The results remain a mystery.

Thank you Southport Moviemakers we had a great evening.

## PROGRAMME REMINDER

**Meetings of the Society are held in the Canons Room at the Harrow Arts Centre. Meetings in italics not at HAC**

### **December 2013**

9<sup>th</sup> Christmas Celebrations.

### **January 2014**

6<sup>th</sup> Digging Deep into Aivar Kaukins Archives.

13<sup>th</sup> Camera Work - The Do's and Dont's with Brian Heard.

# A Little About Microphones

by Tommy Kovacs

It is amazing the amount of information about microphones (in common usage mikes) that is out on the Internet. Some information is accurate, some contradictory and some downright wrong and out of date. Mikes for all intents and purposes convert mechanical movement of a thin diaphragm into electrical signal variation. However, the complexity of the physics of sound and its interaction with recording devices are one of the most complex areas of physics. Many elements cannot be clearly defined since the purely electromechanical devices interact with human hearing characteristics that are individual and variable.

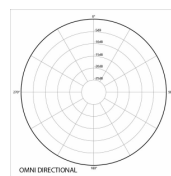
As far as video production is concerned, we are mainly interested in mikes as used in the making of voiceovers. Mikes used for music reproduction need amongst lots of other things, a much wider frequency response than recording of human voice. Frequency response is a measure of the sensitivity of the microphone to convert sound (vibrations) to electrical signal (voltage variation)

The frequency range of orchestral music is between 30Hz and 20,000 Hz. The male human voice ranges between 150Hz and 3500Hz. female voice starts higher up the scale at 250Hz extending to 4000Hz. The measure Hz stands for Hertz and it is the number of vibrations per second.

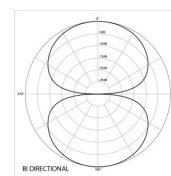
The interpretation of these numbers could be that for voiceovers we could get away using a little less expensive mike compared to recording music at a concert.

Basically there are two families of mikes, the **Dynamic** types and the **Condenser** types. Of course, there are several subgroups in each category depending on the manufacturing details and usage of these mikes. The fundamental difference between them that the dynamic family do not need an input voltage, the movements of a coil inside a permanent magnet produce output voltages proportionate to the sound it receives while the condenser mikes need a constant input voltage that will be modified as an output voltage proportionate to the sound received.

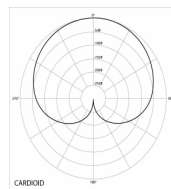
The actual design of the inner workings of microphones determine to a large extent its use in practice. The diagram below shows the main variants.



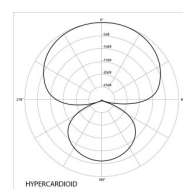
Omnidirectional



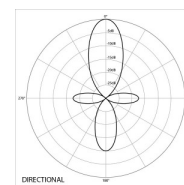
Bidirectional



Cardioid



Hypercardioid



Shotgun

Imagine the microphone sitting in the centre of the diagram pointing towards the top of the page. The black lines represent the sensitivity of the mikes in relation to the direction of the sound reaching the microphone.

The cardioids family of microphones are commonly used as vocal or speech microphones, since they are good at rejecting sounds from other directions. This type would be the ideal choice for voiceover recording in a home or studio. The other most used mikes, often fitted to the accessory shoe of a video camera are the shotgun types. They are highly directional and record sounds nearly exclusively from the direction in which the camera points. Bidirectional microphones are often used in "on the road" television interviewing when the reporter and interviewee are kind of face to face.

In the past I have experimented with many different type of mikes, some worked well some not at all. The performance often dependent on the way I connected the microphones to the recording device. I always used computers to record my voice and the old argument is: what pre-amplification is used (if at all). I am a strong believer that digital sound recordings must by definition be able to be manipulated by computational means. If the sound is represented by numbers then numbers can be manipulated by mathematics. If the mike's output is not sufficient for the computer to react, use a different mike. End of argument!



Recently I bought a Samson C01U USB Studio Condenser Microphone. It cost about £70 and so far it was money well spent. Since condenser mikes need a power supply to operate, it gets its power via the USB connection from the computer. Its output is sufficient to blow the computer away. The pickup pattern of this mike is hypercardioid meaning it picks up sound from the front and to a lesser extent from the back but rejects sounds from the side directions. For best result of voiceovers, avoid reflection of sound reverberating from rear direction. If possible,

avoid making the voiceovers facing a wall or even the computer screen. Read from a printed sheet and edit out the rustling noises in post production. How to do that will be the subject of another short article in the near future. If you can't get away from the wall use an old newspaper (or several) to shield the rear.

If a member of the HCVS would like to try this microphone please contact me during one of the club evenings and we can arrange for a short experiment.

## **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

by Aivar Kaulins

It has been said that "boys love toys", and I am certainly no exception in that respect. Recently I bought



myself a portable DVD player, with which I am very pleased indeed.

This is a Panasonic, model number DVD LS 70, which will also play audio CDs but not BluRay discs. It can be powered off the mains, or by an on-board rechargeable battery or even from a car cigarette lighter - useful if transporting children on the back seat who may get bored on a long journey.

It is claimed that the battery will power the unit for up to five hours when playing DVDs, and obviously somewhat longer if the screen is turned off when playing audio CDs.

The screen size is 6" x 3¼", and the aspect ratio is automatically set by the player. Picture quality is excellent and sound quality more than adequate, bearing in mind the small size of the speakers. The unit weighs two pounds, and thus is easy to hold or to rest on one's knees.

I bought the player from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk) for the most reasonable price of £89.74 including postal delivery. Mine is a multi-regional model, as I frequently buy Region 1 discs from the States, but the same player for the UK's Region 2 only costs £ 62.99 - a real bargain! Interested parties can view a photograph of the player on the amazon website.

Finally, let me assure you that the above comments are only for the benefit of our members, and that I have no financial interest in either Amazon or in Panasonic - I only wish I had!!!

# Chairman's Shield - Open Competition.

By Jeff Jessop

Monday, 7 October was the first of the Society's competitions it was the Open Competition with five entries in the silver section and four in the gold (after some arm-twisting by Aivar).

The first film shown in the silver section was "On Safari at Woburn" by myself. this was about the animals at Woburn and lasted seven minutes. Next was "Songs at Sea" by Wallace Jacobs. This was taken on a Cruise when the resident singer sang songs of Italy.

The third film was by Tommy Kovacs entitled "Marbella's Hidden Treasures" and lasted eight minutes. It was mainly about the bronze sculptures of Salvador Dali which can be seen in the streets around the town.

"Vintage Teas and Classic Cars" by Richard Lawrence was filmed at Eastcote on Father's Day with his iPhone and was, as the title suggests, about vintage cars and lasted five minutes.

The last film in this section was by Geoffrey Foord and was entitled "Antarctica 2013" It lasted 10 mins 30 secs. This was a cruise to the Antarctic Continent and had live commentary by the captain and shots of the glaciers and marine life. There was also further commentary by various members of the expedition.

There was then a short break while the votes for this section were counted. The Competition resumed after the interval with the Gold Section.

The first was one of two films by Ken Mills, Rickmansworth Canal Festival which lasted for 4 mins 30 seconds. There was

plenty of eating drinking singing and dancing filmed on a hot weekend in the summer.

Ken's second film S.O.N. (Save our Northwood). This was drawing attention to Transport for London's plan to sell off land at Northwood to Sainsbury supermarkets for a large development scheme. It included a public meeting at which residents protested strongly about the scheme.

Next was the "Forties Experience" by Judy Long. It took us to Lincolnshire and we were entertained with people dressed in Forties style dress and included dancing and war games.

Maurice Twelvetees' film "SS Great Britain" concerned Brunel's famous old ship which has been restored and is in a dry dock at Bristol. We were taken on board above and below decks of the ship and shown some of its most interesting features. There was an informative commentary and the film lasted six minutes.

As no one had been asked to comment on the films at the end of the presentation, Chairman Tommy Kovacs persuaded the President, Ken Mills to say a few words about the entries.

The results of the open competition were:

## **Gold**

First: "S.O.N." Second: "the Forties experience" third: "SS Great Britain".

## **Silver:**

First "Antarctica 2013" Second: "On Safari at Woburn" third: "Marbella's Hidden Treasures".

## Welcome to New Members

by the Secretary

We offer a warm welcome to Beverly Peter who joined us on the 14th October. She has a Panasonic HC-V720 video camera and is interested in filming and editing. Her films are generally holiday, places of interest and family. She would like to be more proficient on the technical side of video making. She heard about us through our web site on the internet.

We also welcome Bhanopraakash Bheemarasetti who has a PC computer and who heard of us through one of our advertisements.

We wish them both a happy time with us socially and perhaps learning something new about our hobby.

# **Pinner Plate Competition**

**17th October at Potters Bar by Judy Long**

This is the annual competition between Potters Bar MM and The Harrow Cine & Video Society, and was held this year at Potters Bar. The competition was judged by Michael Crowe, and the winner is the club which, in the judge's opinion puts on the more entertaining programme.

Our programme was played first, and consisted of 'On Safari at Woburn' by Jeff Jessop, 'The Nearest We Got to the Olympics' by Alan Colegrave, 'Morpho and Friends' by Judy Long, 'Antarctic Journey' by Geoff Foord, and 'S.O.N.' by Ken Mills. These have all been seen at the club, so i won't review them, but they were generally well received.

Potters Bar's programme consisted of 6 films, three of which were films to poems: the Harold Monro poem 'Overheard on a Saltmarsh' an original and unusual choice by Ed Kinge, with interesting filming; Wordsworth's 'Composed on Westminster Bridge' with excellent footage of the bridge and area by Lyn Orr; and 'Meditation' by Stephen Healing being atmospheric riverside shots to the Lord's Prayer. 'Lavender Blue' by Christine Collins was a nice film of children in fields of lavender, to the song. John Astin's

feel-good film, 'Olympic London' we saw a few weeks ago at the club.

In his remarks afterwards the judge said that up to this point the clubs were fairly even.

The film that turned the competition in Potters Bar's favour, and the area that we MUST address as a club, was their last film, a story entitled 'Moving On', by Team'A'. A good story and script, well acted, beautifully structured, timed and edited, this entertaining film deservedly won the evening for Potters Bar.

Our congratulations to Potters Bar, and our thanks for their hospitality.

It is easy these days to take good quality film; after mastering the basics to do a good editing job, and to add a bit of music and a commentary. After a bit more practice we can all make well-structured documentary films, but it takes a lot more work, imagination, and teamwork to make a good, original, entertaining story film, and it is this sort of film that adds interest to the evening and wins competitions such as this.

Who will rise to the challenge?

## **Filming in Hostile Environment**

**by Tommy Kovacs**

What an outstanding evening. Paul Kittel's talks are invariably informative, interesting and full of technical titbits but this presentation was something special.

Paul opened his talk defining what he meant by hostile environment, i.e., pointing out that even the seemingly normal environment can produce risks to the film maker. There is a larger element of risk when filming in areas of natural hazards such as fast flowing rivers, earthquakes, desert conditions or jungles with creepy crawlies and mosquitoes. Another vast area of hazard is when filming in riot or war conditions.

Most of these conditions are unavoidable but their impact could be minimised by proper preparation. For example, in jungle condition carrying a sufficient amount of water is imperative. This can be even at the expense of filming equipment. On

occasions, the filming crew can get lost even with professional support. One can survive for days without food but water is another matter.

Another hazardous area is when local culture is vastly different to Western standards. In conditions like this the services of a local fixer is crucial. As it happened to Paul on an occasion, the agreed fixer became unavailable and he sent a replacement. Unfortunately the replacement had limited understanding of English and had even more limited connection with the local police. There are customs regulations that are entirely up to the local officers to interpret and without a proper fixer present the result could be serious overpayment of bribes.

And then there is the risk of kidnapping. The local villains get their information via Google and have a fair idea of the value of



the intended victims. One way to avoid such an event is to change travel details often and keep the information well away from anybody local.

Reporting events from parts of the world where inter-religious conflict occurs can be especially dangerous. A white face in a crowd is pretty conspicuous and one side or the other may see some temporary advantage shooting the reporter and his camera man. Unfortunately several reporters and camera men were casualties of local disputes.

Paul interspersed his talk with several short videos illustrating the conditions under which he had to work. It is simply amazing what risks news people take to bring the

message back for us mere mortals to stay abreast of what is happening in the world. One of his stories about the events in the Sudan was especially interesting. It was about a television series called "80 Trades around the world". It was broadcast on the BBC. In essence the series showed an individual trading his way around the world. The segment Paul showed was in the Sudan where confusion ruled over the whole filming. Eventually they got a programme in the can but it was quite different to what they intended to do.

All through Paul's evening one could hear a pin drop so much his audience hung on to his every word. We all hope that we could have Paul back soon and listen to his informative and absorbing presentation.



Visiting a remote Tribe in the Amazon Jungle



Travelling to a remote area by Helicopter



A Portrait somewhere in the Jungle



Filming in the Egyptian Desert