



HARROW FILM MAKERS

www.harrowfilmmakers.org.uk

NEWS AND VIEWS

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DECEMBER 2014

NUNEATON MOVIEMAKERS AND ALAN ATKINSON'S FILMS

By Judy Long

For our first evening of the season on 8th September, we were presented with some films from Nuneaton Moviemakers and Alan Atkinson.

First we watched 'Out of Darkness' by Alan Atkinson, the story of making light from fires to modern electric bulbs.

This was followed by the 2011 film 'Fly-past', a NMM documentary about the history of aviation in the Coventry area.

Each of these documentaries displayed an impressive amount of research and information and were well received. They mixed stills, archive footage and new footage to good effect. It was commented that perhaps the first film contained too much information and needed some changes of pace. Being 'interest' films, some members preferred the first film and some the second.

We then watched two films involving heavy use of the blue/green and special effects, each followed by a piece explaining how the film was made.

The work and time involved in making these two films was truly mind-boggling and they were great examples of the true amateur enthusiast's devotion to his hobby, involving a lot of imagination, and a very high level of creative and technical skills.

The first one, 'Just Someone' was a comedy and the second 'Extinction Event' concerned the potential destruction of the world by a comet and had a good script and acting, visual film references and a genuine appearance by Patric Moore.

Some parts of the green screening and effects were more believable than others, but the 'making of' Films were most informative and useful and provided loads of interesting ideas.

The films were great fun, humbling to those with a more laid-back approach and inspiring to those interested in the use of the green screen.

Thank you to Nuneaton for an entertaining evening.

A Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all our Members and Friends

AN INTRODUCTION TO COLOUR CORRECTION

By **Tommy Kovacs**

In the process of video making colour takes a central place just as importantly as music. Modern video cameras and DSLRs (digital single lens reflex cameras) can produce very life like colours however, it is often necessary to manipulate them for enhancing the story telling. A secondary reason for colour correction is that the depth of colour (saturation) to some extent deteriorates by transferring colour data from the camera to the computer.

Sometimes change of the colour in the composition helps to identify different times in the story and on occasion it brings into focus the central message. In this instance the Palm Island in Dubai was under construction in 2007 and the sepia colouring was used to emphasise the time difference between the 2007 and 2013 completed conditions.



Sepia Picture of Dubai 2007



Dubai 2013

The other alternative, often used in film making is to represent present time in colour and black & white to indicate past events.

In this instance Adobe's Premiere Pro CS6 is used to demonstrate the method used in this simple colour adjustment. There are similar correction methodology exist in most editing suites.

The "Effect" used here is the Fast Colour Corrector. The module works by moving the central slider in direction of the sepia segment to change the overall colour cast of the clip. This is also a useful function to remove colour cast from clips by moving the slider in the opposite direction to the colour one needs to minimise. When making a video requires outside filming, it is not possible to control natural light to a degree required to maintain colour continuity of the story. Let assume that the story requires the actor to walk down the street, cross the road and knock on a door. It is likely that in the time required to complete several alternative shots of the actor walking down the road and set up the shot for the actor knocking on the door, clouds will cover part of the sky. This will inevitably change the colour and intensity of the ambient light. The unprocessed clips will have serious difference in colour casts leaving the audience to wonder about the continuity of the action.

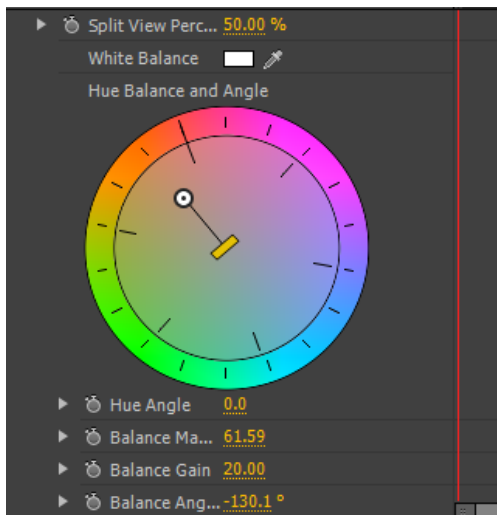


FIG 1 Colour Wheel



Brian Heard kindly provided an excellent example to demonstrate the need for colour correction. The clip was taken recently while photographing a scene in the club video production: “When there is a will”. The scene shows a solicitors office with people sitting at a conference table and one member of the family arrive late.

FIG2 is a picture exported from the original video showing an example of the edited clip would look like.

Brian also provided an original uncorrected clip from which the picture in FIG 3 is exported.

FIG 3 is an exported picture showing a young man entering the room.



In FIG 3. The young man enters the room to join the family discussion. It is quite obvious that the “Take” was made under different lighting condition which resulted in a significant blue (cold) colour wash of the Take. Combining the two clips into one sequence would make the audience realise that there is something wrong in the editing.

By using complex colour correction function available in Apple’s Final Cut editing suits, Brian removed the blue cast (warming the clip). An exported picture of this clip is shown in FIG 4.



FIG 4. Colour corrected picture (Apple’s Final Cut)

By using Adobe’s Premiere Pro CS6’s Fast Colour Corrector similar result can be achieved. FIG 5. shows an exported picture corrected by moving the arm of the colour wheel in the opposite direction to the blue

colour to remove the blue(cold) cast.

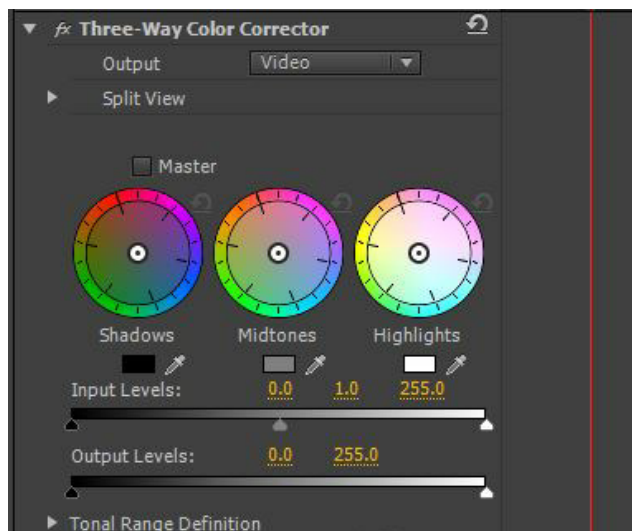


FIG 5. Colour corrected picture (Premiere Pro CS6)

There is however, a major limitation in using Fast Colour Correction function that it changes colour cast of the whole range of colours that make up the clip. This limitation however, can be overcome by using a different correction function called Three

Way Colour Corrector.

It works similarly to the Fast Colour Corrector by moving the centre point in direction of the colour which needed to be emphasised or away from the colour that needs to be minimised. The great advantage of this “Effect” is that there are three wheels for each of Highlight, Midtones and



Shadows. The pipette looking colour pickers are used to select which element of the picture is regarded as Highlight, Midtones or Shadows.

FIG 6. Three-way Colour Corrector.

There are control sliders for Input and Output levels, Tonal Range Definition and for eight other characteristics that help to achieve perfect colour balance. The use of these controls is outside the scope of this article but it suffices to say that the only way to learn their use is experimentation. Not every slider works in every colour condition and only

“try and error” method can yield acceptable result.

Colour correction is an art by itself. Professional film makers invariably use post production for colour correction and their specialist practitioners are called “Colourists”. However, that is no excuse not to try one’s best to achieve a video that is pleasing to the eye.

AN EVENING WITH TOM HARDWICK – 22 SEPTEMBER 2014

by Richard Lawrence



Tom with his Sony NX5 Camera

Norman Lewis welcomed back Tom Hardwick, a well-known wedding videographer and an active contributor to the IAC’s magazine, film and video maker.

Tom kicked off the evening by saying that he was delighted to be back with us and that it was almost three years to the day since he last visited the Harrow Film Makers. Tom then introduced his new assistant, Celia, who was interested in becoming a wedding photographer. Although he felt that the wedding video business was winding down slightly, he had it found enormously helpful to have two people on site when making a wedding video.

By having two people at an event he did not need to be concerned with moving his equipment about the location and potentially missing crucial moments of the ceremony.

Tom then went on to describe the technology changes that had happened since he had last talked to us. 3-D had come and gone. Video cameras were moving from having three small CMOS image chips to single chips with an ever-increasing size. Zoom lenses have less and less zoom capability. He cited the comparison of his Sony NX5 camera with a 20X zoom which was good for the ‘run and gun’ style of shooting. With large image chip cameras, one needed to be much more careful with focusing, however the one great advantage is the differential focus effects that one can achieve.

He saw one of the great advantages of 4K resolution over 2K (HD) resolution is that it gives the editor the ability to zoom right in on a shot in post-production whilst maintaining full HD resolution. Tom then gave us a run down on equipment that he didn’t have three years ago. This included portable LED lights, storage on memory cards rather than tape and

LCD monitors to supplement the too small camera viewfinders.

His new second camera is a Panasonic SD900 which Celia has been using. This has provided more than adequate quality pictures. In some instances it outperforms the Sony NX5 apart from the difficulty of selecting settings for manual operation. He went on to extoll the virtues of Blu-ray, citing that recordable blanks can now be had for 20p. He bemoaned the lack of publicity surrounding this standard and the slow uptake by the general public.

Referring to his recent articles in film and video maker on miniature video cameras, he demonstrated the SJ4000, £52 camera, c/w waterproof housing. We were then shown film he had made at his swimming club using this camera both underwater and tracking swimmers overhead by mounting the camera on a pole. The results were very impressive. It is also a useful device to 'shoot' yourself, being very small and lightweight. Tom then, by way of contrast, showed us a standard 8 film shot in 1967 entitled 'Paper' which documented how London's newspaper sellers worked. The film was well cut and shot and a lovely potted history of the newspaper sellers at work.



Celia talking about Wedding

At this point Tom handed over to Celia who gave us her candid view of being a photographer assisting Tom at

wedding venues. She went on to describe a day with Tom at a wedding shoot. Her stories had memories for all of us, like the time she forgot to turn on the camera so spent the whole day with no recorded film at all. Her enthusiasm for the subject shone through and was clearly not deterred by the hiccups experienced along the way.

For the second half of the evening Tom started by talking about using the 200fps function of the Sony camera to provide wonderful slow motion effects. He illustrated these with some film clips of brides being spun around by their grooms. He then gave us a rundown of how he uses the various camera settings and why particular settings are used. He went on to show various films of weddings he had taken to illustrate the issues presented and how they were overcome. Tom then showed us a film he had made of Celia's daughter on a trampoline. This presented many filming problems, as one can visualise, in keeping the trampolinist in shot whilst getting good close-ups. This film also illustrated the value of the fast 200fps camera function to slow-down rapid movement, making the film more watchable.

An interesting and thought provoking evening came to a close all too soon and Norman, in his closing remarks, thanked Tom and Celia for giving us an insight into wedding filming and a fascinating run through of new equipment such as the £52 camera and what it can do for you.

HOW TO INTERVIEW PEOPLE

By Dave Smith

The arrival of Dave with his two cameras, two tripods, a couple of metal cases which carried two monitors, earphones, batteries etc plus a dolly and enough cables to knit a pair of socks. It was more like a scaffolder had come to erect a platform to paint the club ceiling! Geoff Foord gave Dave a hand connecting up the gear and the evening was underway.

Dave owned up to the fact that he hadn't a clue on how to interview people (and how right he was!) Dave was hoping for a hands on evening with ALL club members taking part instead of just sitting around on their Derrière.

Interviewing finally got under way with the active club members taking part, but most members I'm afraid to say were right out of their comfort zone and

didn't join in . Dave had set one camera at 16:9, the second set at 4:3 hoping to compare the end results of the two formats. It was most interesting to see how the members cope at being thrown in at the deep end. Tea break couldn't come quick enough for some members and a few left as the evening just wasn't their cup of tea (no pun intended!). Those who stayed for further punishment were disappointed as Brian Heard saved the evening by giving his expertise on how to conduct interviews using two cameras. Geoff Foord and Richard Lawrence manned the cameras with Dave on the boom (best place for him) . Ken Mills interviewed Tommy Kovacs under Brian's direction

suggesting camera angles and when to use close ups etc.

Overall the evening was different and the good news is there are two more evenings to come with Dave, so have your excuses ready on why you won't be attending. I did hear on the grape vine that Dave's wife Jean is out buying him a bullet proof vest just in case. Dave said that he will burn the raw footage taken on the evening to DVD's for club members who want to edit it on their own computers and just to reiterate, you have two more scintillating evenings to come with me at the wheel so I may see some of you again.

THE PREMIERE OF 'WHERE THERE'S A WILL'

By Tommy Kovacs

The 18th of September was a significant date in the history of Harrow Film Makers. We had the world premiere our recent "club production". Brian Heard presented the completed project and explained the salient points in the history of making the film.

The story itself is interesting. It begins in a solicitor's office reading the will to the relatives of the deceased. The all inherit some parts of the deceased's property but when they want to take charge, they realise that it is valueless. One young man proposes that there may be a more recent will that they need to find in the house of the deceased. They find the will and in it £5000 is left for each member of the family. They happily leave the office. The lion share of the estate is left to the North Wales Polar Bear Preservation Society. Guess who are the managers of the fund?: - the Solicitor and the Young Man.

Making this video provided an excellent opportunity to experience all the problems involving managing a group of people. Brian had wide experience in professional film making in his working life and he brought this professionalism to making "The Will". There was plenty of teething problems, beefing up the original script, working around actors' availability, location and sufficient crew.

Without Judy Long's enthusiastic support the project wouldn't have seen the daylight. Judy resurrected the project after collapse by not having the actors available. Celine Terranova and Alan Colgrave found alternative actors, Geoff Foord secured suitable location and the project was moving again. The next problem was to find a relatively empty pub where the Young Man was sitting. As the project progressed, the already short list of the crew got shorter. At the end everybody did whatever was necessary at the time. There were of course the nameless others without whose contribution there would have been no club video.

The second half of the evening focused on the constructional elements of the video. The music was specially scored to emphasise the story as it developed. The music blended into the story that it was nearly "invisible" but drove the story forward.

The photography and editing reflected Director Brian Heard's vast film making experience. He asked for several shots of the same scene to have the opportunity to assemble the story as best as possible. In both outside and inside takes light changes resulted in various colour casts that made the clips incompatible. It has taken some real effort to apply colour

correction in post-production to match otherwise completely incompatible clips. Brian demanded a professional approach that was well represented in the final

product. It is a club production to be proud of. And we are. Thank you Brian and all supporting crew, well done.

WHY WE CHANGED OUR NAME!

By Ken Mills



Old Logo

For many years our intake of new members had dwindled and our publicity did not seem to have had any effect. The usual reasons were suggested: people don't have time for a hobby now, mistakes in the holiday video when shown were simply fast forwarded so why bother to edit and so on.

At the AGM in May while this was being discussed, the point was put forward that perhaps our title didn't show clearly what we did and anyway 'Cine' makes us look old fashioned. Similarly the word 'Video' appears to be used less and be coming absorbed in the more generic term 'Film'. Even the word 'Society' might be seen as being a bit 'enclosed' and not open and welcoming.



New Logo

So Harrow Film Makers was felt to be the best option as it spelled out what was our main activity (or should be!)

However according to our Constitution, before a change of name could be officially adopted it needed to be discussed and voted on by all the members at a Special General meeting. With the requisite notice given, the meeting took place on the 8th September and the proposal was debated.

A number of people felt that Harrow Cine & Video Society was a well established name so why change it, while others thought that Harrow Film Makers was a more active and descriptive name and might generate more interest in the hobby. As a compromise, for the next 12 months our literature would show our new name with (*aka Harrow Cine & Video Society*) placed beneath it in order to show the association.

This was then put to the members present and the change of name was agreed by more than the requisite number of votes, so was duly adopted.

PROGRAMME REMINDER

Meetings of the Harrow Film Makers are held in the Canons Room at the Harrow Arts Centre

DECEMBER 2014

- 1st Professional Film Director David Stevens and his way with "Holiday Videos"
- 8th Making a film - an evening with David Smith.
- 15th Christmas Celebrations.

JANUARY 2014

- 5th "4K Good or Bad" with Alan Colegrave.
- 12th Tim Stoddard - "Making a Drama".
- 19th Chairman's Shield Competition 1. Holiday. 2. Family
- 26th The making of "Where there's a Will" with Brian Heard.

The Pinner Plate

By Judy Long

3rd November saw Harrow Film Makers hosting the annual Pinner Plate Competition against Potters Bar, won last year by Potters Bar.

We were pleased to welcome several members from Potters Bar and the judge, Brenda Granshaw FACI, the Chairman of the North Thames Region of the IAC. The evening saw a programme of films from each club, to be no more than 40 minutes long, the winner being the programme judged to be the 'most entertaining'.

The evening started with Harrow's films. They were Dave Smith's 1 minute 'Smoke Alarm Advert', Ian Brown's 'To Docklands and Beyond', the club production 'Where there's a Will, directed by Briam Heard, 'Splish Splash' from Richard Lawrence, Dave Smith's 'Fund Raising' and negotiating', another club production, directed by Tommy Kovacs.

Brenda then commented on these films, praising them as a very good selection, and very entertaining.

After the break we saw Potters Bar's films, starting with '70 degrees North', John Astin's film about his trip by mail boat around the coast of Norway. This was followed by 'Autumn Gold' by Ed Kinge', an advert for the eponymous beer, with shots of autumn leaf colour. Next up was 'The Gamble', a Palmer Production drama

about blind dating. Edward Catton-Orr contributed 'Waterloo Sunset', Shots around Waterloo to the Kinks song. John Astin's second film was 'Steaming Harz' about the German steam railway, and the last to be shown was the amusing 'One Night Only' by Team 'A' - Yes, but you could have!

Brenda's comments particularly praised John Astin's films.

Making her choice of winner, Brenda said that although Potters Bar's were technically better, the criterion of the competition was 'entertainment', and she proclaimed Harrow as the winner.

Ron Jones, the President of Potters Bar presented the trophy to Ken Mills.

Our thanks to Brenda and to the members from Potters Bar for a most rewarding evening.

In my comments on last year's Pinner Plate, it was noted that the film that tipped last year's competition in Potters Bar's favour was their drama film. It would seem that we have addressed this with this year's entry. Let's keep up the good work and make more club dramas.

You can listen to the critique of the films on the 'Competitions' page of the website, and see pictures on our Facebook page.

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