Cine Chat

The Journal of Edinburgh
Cine & Video Society
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EH3 6RH

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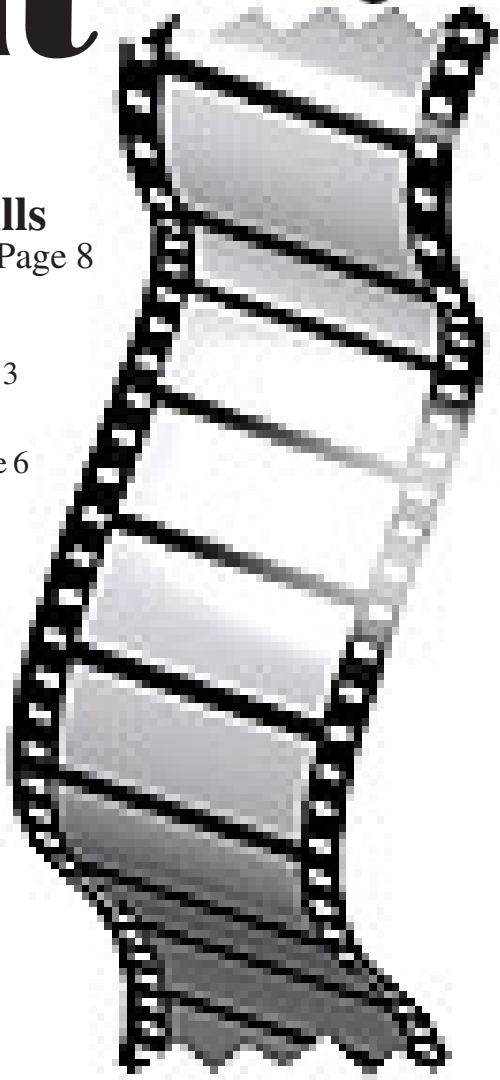

http://www.ecvs.co.uk

About ECVS

Some things you might like to know if you are new to Edinburgh Cine and Video Society

The Waverley Cine Society which became Edinburgh Cine Society was founded in 1936, and is the oldest amateur movie-making society in Scotland. The Society has occupied premises in Fettes Row, in the New Town of Edinburgh since its inception. The society met in rented rooms until 1938, at which time, for £500, it purchased both the ground floor and the basement of number 23, Fettes Row to become the only Cine club in Scotland to own its own meeting rooms.

Escalating maintainance costs over the years forced the society to sell the ground floor of the building in 1975, and move downstairs to its existing clubrooms in the basement, which the society still owns. The clubrooms consist of a kitchen, toilets, and four main meeting rooms, one of which is fitted out with cinema seats for viewing video and cine films projected onto the large screen from the clubs video and cine projectors. The other rooms are used as a lounge and two multi-use studios or instructional areas, with video equipment and computer editing facilities installed.

CLUBROOMS

23A Fettes Row, Edinburgh, EH3 6RH
Website: **http://www.ecvs.co.uk**

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EDITOR:
Alan Brown
23A Fettes Row, Edinburgh EH3 6RH
Email: alan@broon.co.uk

To whom all communications in connection with Cine Chat should be sent. Alternatively, members may leave notes in the Cine Chat Post Box, which will be available in the ECVS clubrooms at all times.

POLICY COMMITMENT:

To publish informative and entertaining articles, features, news, comments and opinion about movie making in general and ECVS and it's members in particular. Never to cause intentional offence, but not to be afraid of occassional controversy. To publish members letters, comments, rights of reply, and submitted articles, as accurately as possible and to correct in the first available edition, any errors or omissions which may have inadvertently occurred in previous editions. COST: Free to members of ECVS unless and until the Committee decide otherwise.

ECVS OFFICIALS 2008 - 2009

President:	Bob Bell
Vice-President:	Sean Groat
Past President:	Stewart Emm
Secretary:	Hugh Trevor
Treasurer:	Vic Young
Subscriptions:	Alan Brown (acting)

Editors Column

Welcome to the April 2009 issue of Cine-Chat!

As you've probably already noticed, we have a slightly larger issue this month, as the number of contributions received has greatly increased! Thanks to all the contributors, and please keep up the good work!

We have several interesting film-making articles, a review of the new Panasonic HD SD9 camcorder, a 'Behind the Scenes' making-of article detailing the preparative work required in the production of Alan Taylor's film 'Mind of Obsession', a guide to the work being done to convert the ECVS film library to miniDV format, and competition results for this years Choice of the Clubs competition, and the Budgie Cup.

What didn't make it into this months issue, was my introduction to the new ECVS website, so by means of an abbreviated version here, I'd just like to draw your attention to the site:

www.ecvs.co.uk

For those that haven't already taken a look, please do so! - We've got the club syllabus online, where we will also be able to notify members of any last minute changes to scheduled events/additional events, as well as a guide to all the competitions ECVS runs/takes part in.

We also have a Showcase of club and members films, which can be viewed directly in your web browser, a guide to the history of the club, and details of any current projects being undertaken by members.

As always, any suggestions/additions for inclusion in Cine-Chat or the website appreciated!

Sad News for ECVS

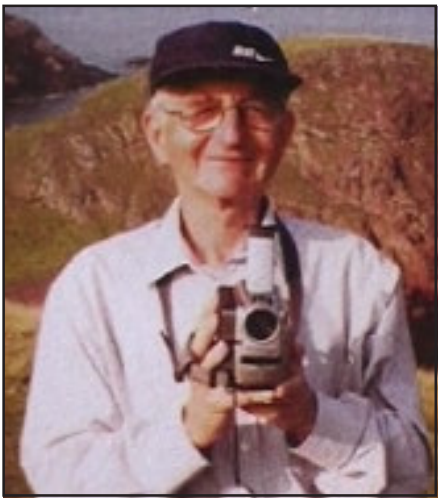
CineChat is sad to announce the recent deaths of two of our long-standing members, John Henry and Dan McKenzie. Both John and Dan were active members of the club, keen to get involved in many club projects and producing some excellent and enjoyable films. They will both be sadly missed.

DAN McKENZIE

We were sad to learn of the death on 12th January of former ECVS Treasurer, Dan McKenzie. Until his stroke prevented him, Dan was a most enthusiastic, knowledgeable and encouraging photographer and movie-maker who was ahead in experimenting with the latest editing technology.
Although missed, we enjoyed Dan's return visits with Joan to the Awards Presentation Party evenings.

In kindly giving permission to print her poem, Dan's daughter, Lynn adds:

"Dad always enjoyed the video club so much, and met so many friends there. Thank you all for remembering him."



With his zoom lens
He blotted out irrelevance
He focussed on the heart of things
Giving us his wisdom
Of perfect clarity

With his wide angle
He captured all, objectively
Saw his subject panoramically
Guiding us in the right direction
His view, infallible

And then in these last years
Time lapse
The focus blurred
The image obscured
His portfolio locked away
Visible only in glimpses
But there, still there

And now, the shutter shut
The aperture closed
A gallery of memories
An album of experience
And a lifetime of love
Still with us
Always

JOHN HENRY

CineChat is sad to report the death of John Henry on 10th January 2009. John had been a member of ECVS for many years, and was club President in 1997/ 1998. Always an active member of the committee, John was most recently our subscription secretary and regular Thursday night projectionist.

I personally first got to know John on the rainy fields of Bannockburn, and soon realised his infectious enthusiasm rubbed off on all he met! Subsequently he showed me the ropes of projection, and regailed me with many a tale of ECVS days gone by!

John was always one of the first volunteers when making club films, or members projects, and could always be relied upon to get 'stuck in' to any projects with no complaints - regardless of what we asked him to do. Thus he features in many club productions, and his contribution and enthusiasm will be long remembered in ECVS, and by everyone who knew him.

Choice of Clubs Competition 2009

The final of this years Choice of Clubs competition was held in the ECVS clubrooms on Friday 20th February 2009. ECVS members cast their votes for their favourite films, and the total points received by each film, from all the participating clubs were added in order to calculate the final placings.

Congratulations to Perth Camcorder Club who came top of the scoreboard with 127 points for their excellent entry - 'This Time of Year'.

Entry Title	Club	Points	Place
This Time of Year	Perth Camcorder Club	127	1
The Cutting Edge	Dundee Moviemakers	120	2
Mako Sika (Dakota Badlands)	ECVS	108	3
The Fixer	Largs Cine & Video	37	4
Seven Bridges to Cross	Carslisle & Borders CVC	26	5
Fair Do's	N. Ireland CC	22	6
Best of Barber Shop	Ayrshire V & CC	16	7
Colour	Stewarty & District	14	8
Don't Throw it Away	Monklands	9	9
Auld Buses	Dunfermline	4	10

Panasonic HD SD9 Review

By Peter Dick

This review is based on my experience, having used this camera for three months, as well as some of my researching done before deciding to buy it.

The Panasonic HD_SD9 is a very small high definition palm held camcorder. At the time of writing Panasonic claim that it is the smallest in the world. It achieves this size by eliminating the mechanical tape drive. This means the only moving parts are located in the zoom lens system. It records on to SDHC memory cards which are descended from the popular and familiar SD card. The HD_ SD9 uses a new recording format called AVCHD (Advanced Video Codec High Definition) which has been developed as an alternative to tape and DVD based devices. On the camera's best quality setting a 4 GB SDHC class 4 (or better) card can hold about half an hour of recording

Panasonic's efforts in minimizing the size means the viewfinder is restricted solely to the fold out LCD screen. This has a multi axis hinge which allows viewing from many angles. When viewing from the front of the camera when filming oneself the image is automatically shown in the correct orientation. The viewfinder is purely a display device (not a touch screen). When the viewfinder is open most of the controls are exposed including a minute joystick which selects various operations. It is tricky to use at first but becomes a little easier with practice,

Panasonic have devised a series of logical menus for the camera functions, and an automatic set of supplementary hints aimed at new users. I think that most users will be operate this camera in automatic mode. This gives reasonable results although under difficult lighting conditions some bright subjects can burn to white.

Used outdoors on a sunny day the results are very good although the colour is somewhat oversaturated. By contrast under dim light the benefits of having high definition fade and the resulting image is much less distinct. To be fair to get an image at all under low light is a bonus, most cameras will struggle under these conditions.

The image is generated by three CCD sensors which generally produce better picture quality than single sensors under good lighting conditions. One sensor for each primary light colour. Most high quality and professional cameras use 3 sensors.

The lens is a 10x zoom by Leica, in 35mm terms the focal length range is close to 43 - 430mm f1.8 - f2.8. The Autofocus system works well and one does not feel obliged to use manual focusing. (Manual focusing is an option and is set by the joystick, this is almost impossible to achieve. A focus lock facility would be far more practical and useful).

The auto focus does struggle under low light conditions and views lacking vertical detail. These conditions affect almost every consumer autofocus system. The HDC_SD9 does suffer quite badly from lens flare. Point light sources will produce an exaggerated vertical star-burst effect. Finally on the optical front Panasonic have also provided an optical image stabiliser (OIS). Most manufacturers provide some form of image stabilisation these days. Small light cameras benefit greatly from this system. The HDC_SD9 is no exception and it works well. For better stability a monopod or even better a tripod should be used.

A useful feature that this new tapeless technology provides is that of a three second pre record buffer. This allow you to record the framed subject three seconds prior to pushing the record button. For example recording the star of a race. Again do not forget to keep the subject framed. This feature does use some extra power from the battery, which shortens its life before it needs recharging.

Another handy feature that can be selected is an automatic recording cut off when the camera is pointing at the ground. It saves recording one's feet for minutes at a time.

The sound is recorded from a microphone assembly mounted on the top of the camera. This location catches the wind and sometimes your fingers, so beware. There are several options available including Dolby's 5.1 system. I have only used the zoom mode with wind noise cut. The wind noise is a problem with most built in microphones. I use a furry cover over the microphone unit. This is a great help but not a complete cure. No provision has been made for an external microphone or headphones.

The HDC_SD9 does have stills picture facility. This will do, if you have forgotten the still camera, but do not expect too much. After saying that do remember that you do have a zoom lens whose range well exceeds most compact still cameras. Do not forget that default shutter speed is 1/50 second, a telephoto shot will need a faster shutter speed setting. A limited flash is available for short rage photographs under poor light. Again I must say that it is designed as a movie camera and that is the area it works the best.

Connecting the HDC_SD9 to ones system. Some connections are behind the viewfinder door and are located under a tethered small cover. It is easy not to fully click this cover on after use and then the viewfinder will not close properly.
The HDMI (a mini version) connection is located behind the battery. This requires using the power supply/ charger. To use the USB link the power supply/charger must also be used. This might catch out those wanting to download their SDHC card to a laptop directly from the camera. An external reader should resolve this issue.

A couple of cautionary notes.

Please note the U.S. and European HD versions are NOT the same. Europe uses 1080i or p/50 with PAL standard definition playback. The U.S. uses 1080i or p/60 and NTSC standard definition playback. Choose with care. The European model will have a "CE" mark.

A word of WARNING. At present AVCHD, being a new format, can only be played by a limited number of devices, including the camera. This will require users to invest in additional equipment or to start collecting the SDHC cards. Panasonic does provide some software for modern PC computers. There is no supplied software for Apple Computers or Linux systems. No doubt solutions have been developed for these systems but that out with the scope of this review. In time these difficulties will be overcome and, with little doubt, AVCHD users will be well served by many manufactures. All I am stressing now is that a buyer should be aware of the current situation.

A little technical information.

Options for manual users. Zebra stripes can be selected to warn of overexposure conditions. The operator can then decide on what action is needed to manage overexposure. The zebra triggering level is 100% and is not adjustable. (the SD9 will record superwhite, levels exceeding 100% I measured about 105%) There is also an option to generate the colour bar test signal for calibration. The test signal is accurate for both Luminance and Chrominance with 75% bars. These measurements were made with an ex BBC Tektronix Vectorscope/Waveform monitor fed from the standard definition composite port.

And finally, I keep the HD_ SD9 in a Lowepro lens case. It fits a large pocket or a reasonable bag. This encourages it to be taken out more often than a larger camera. The results more recorded video memories. This review is based on my experience and, therefore, is not an exhaustive study. There are more and well detailed reviews available on the web. The SD9 user manual can be downloaded from Panasonic. Any potential buyer should thoroughly research the subject before making the decision to buy. I hope my notes assist in this quest. I have had much fun with the Panasonic HD_ SD9 and I recommend it.

Making a Video from Stills

By Jim Closs

About eighteen months ago I was undergoing chemotherapy and confined to the house, so looking for things to occupy my time. One activity was scanning a large collection of 35mm slides of mountain walking holidays with the objective of turning some of them into a short film. During this I experienced a number of problems but also learned a great deal and this started a reflection on how the use of still images in video projects has changed over the past few years.

Most of the projects we get involved in as amateur film makers probably only require the use of one or two still images - maybe up to a handful - so they are useful additions to the project but not the major interviews with people who have climbed all of the Scottish 'Munros' - ie mountains over 3000ft. They would mention a favourite mountain, or their first or last Munro, and often had a photo or painting of it. I just pointed my camera at the

photo and took a clip. I then either used a few seconds of the clip or - if it wasn't steady enough - exported a frame from the clip and use that instead. Most of us have probably done that and it works well enough when only a few images are required, and shown only for 2-3 seconds.

But in some of the projects I've been involved in over the past few years **the whole film**, or the most important part of it, consisted of still images. This commonly happens when the subject matter is historical and there are no people or places, or even objects related to the story that you can film. I had an idea for a project on ancient forts in a Scottish glen. The forts were marked on the ordnance survey map but when I visited them they were just piles of stones! Nothing meaningful to film.

In these circumstances you have to rely on printed records of some kind that are either directly related to the subject - or at least look as if they are related. If you watch some of the documentaries on TV - especially the UK History channel - you'll see that they use a lot of stills. Moreover, they will often take a photograph and use it repeatedly - usually taking smaller and smaller details from it to provide a variety of images. When your whole project, or the biggest part of it, consists of stills then you are into a different ball game.

Animating stills

The main limitation in using stills, obviously, is that they don't move - yet videos are movies A few stills scattered through a movie don't make you think it isn't a movie. But if the *whole film* consists of a succession of still images then people immediately see it as a slide show - which is what it is. The trick is to use the stills so that you retain a **semblance** of movement on the screen and for that we have to use a simple form of *Animation*. Not the kind of animation we see in Wallace and Gromit. For projects with stills there are really only two simple kinds of animation we can use - namely:-

1. **Zoom** into or out of the still image, and
2. **Pan** across it

Rostrum Camera Work

Using still images in a film or video is usually referred to as Rostrum Camera work. This stems from the early days of two dimensional animation when an image to be filmed would be placed on the table of a rostrum (Fig 1). The rostrum mount ensured good steady shots and the camera could be moved down to zoom into the image - or up to zoom out of it. The sheet with the still could also be moved sideways to give the effect of panning across the image. These simple techniques helped to give some movement to the image and make it more acceptable in a film or video.

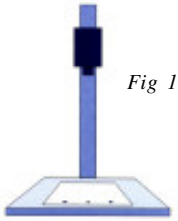


Fig 1 - Simple Rostrum Camera

Rostrum cameras used by the professionals became highly technical, computer controlled pieces of equipment beyond the budgets and capabilities of amateurs like ourselves. But the general idea of filming a still image by just pointing your camera at it

is what most of us have had to do at some time or other in a video project - and with varying degrees of success. Getting it right is not always easy. Using a tripod is obviously essential but you also have to take care with how the image is lit. Normally you would use two lamps - one each at the left and right of the image to try and ensure an even level of illumination.

Problems with Rostrum Technique

The rostrum camera approach can work quite well but there are problems - especially when the images are small.

1. Focus: - It can be hard to focus and you may have to use a close up lens to get far enough in for the selection you want. If you are working with the camera viewfinder it can be difficult to spot if the image is accurately focused. Better to use the camera's LCD screen or better still - link the camera up to a good monitor.

2. Depth of Field:- You may have an image well focused but then find that zooming in can take it out of focus as the depth of field is very small. The same applies to zooming out.

3. Panning:- Panning across an image can be very difficult - even with a good quality fluid head tripod. It is difficult to avoid a slight jerk at the beginning and end of the pan as you start and stop the movement.

4. Horizontal/Vertical:- Panning really has to be limited to horizontal or vertical movement. If you want to do a diagonal pan - or any other variant - it is almost impossible to achieve a smooth motion by hand - no matter how good your tripod is. If you want to pan and zoom at the same time it can be done but is very difficult.

5. *Pixellation:-* Post production options are very limited. For example, you could use the camera to film an image at full size and then use your editing package to zoom in on it - or pan across it. The problem here is that as soon as you zoom in even a little you start to get pixellation and the results are very unsatisfactory (See Fig 2 & Fig 3)

Fig 2 -
Map taken from guide book with video camera

Fig 3 - Pixellation when you zoom in

Using a Scanner

For my latest projects involving stills I have switched to using a Scanner and abandoned the rostrum camera. Scanners are fairly cheap these days. The main advantage of using a scanner is that you can create a high

resolution image which you can zoom into without getting pixellation. The map in Fig 2 is about 2.5 inches square. I scanned it at 600 dpi to create a high resolution image. What you then get is a large image file - much larger than the size required for displaying on the screen. Fig 4 shows the scanned image of the map and Fig 5 shows it zoomed in to the equivalent level of Fig 3. Note that there is no sign of pixellation.

Fig 4 - Scanned version of map

Fig 5 - No pixellation when you zoom in

You can create an image file of whatever resolution you want. I scanned the map at 600 dpi but I could have scanned it at 1200 or even 2400 dpi. The higher the resolution the further you can zoom in to the image without pixellation. Of course, the higher the resolution the larger the file size. Your editing software will have an upper limit on the size of file you can import. In Adobe Premiere Pro you can't import a file larger than 4096 X 4096 pixels - but that's more than enough for the kind of zooming in most of us would ever want to do. With the problem of pixellation overcome, you can zoom and pan around the image to create the kind of animation effects that will put at least some movement back into your movie.

If you don't want to use a scanner you could, of course, achieve the same result by using a Digital Still Camera. Most people have access to such cameras these days and they give you a high quality digital image which is easily loaded on to your computer

Animating clips using Keyframes

Once you have scanned or photographed the image, you can import it into your editing package and begin to animate it. For this you will need to use Keyframes. A keyframe is simply a marker on the timeline of your project which says to your software "when you get to this point - do this" - where "this" will be an instruction to zoom or pan, or both. I am using Adobe Premiere Pro CS3 and in this package the relevant keyframe controls are referred to as "Scale" and "Position". The Scale control lets you set the amount of zoom you want. The Position control lets you set the horizontal and vertical position - like the X and Y coordinates in a graph.

The detailed procedure for using keyframe animation will vary from one software package to another but the basic principles are quite simple.

1. Scan each image to create a large high resolution file. (OR Use a digital camera).
2. Import each file and place the clips on the timeline
3. Within each clip choose a Starting point and apply Scale and Position keyframes for the view you want.
4. Move to where you want the animation to Finish and add Scale and Position keyframes there
5. You can also add intermediate keyframes if you wish to create more complex movements
6. Then render the clips

I now do all my films using stills in this way. A short demonstration of how to set the keyframes for zooming and panning the map in Fig 4 above in Adobe Premiere is available at:
http://ecvs1936.googlepages.com/tutorial_premprodemo.htm
and a short clip from the finished film can be seen at *:*
http://ecvs1936.googlepages.com/tutorial_icelandmap.htm

Making films from Slides

The difficulty with slides is that they need to be illuminated. One way of doing this would be to project them on to a screen and film the screen - as in cine to video transfer. But few of us have slide projectors these days. Another approach would be to use a slide viewer or light box and a "Rostrum" camera. But both of these approaches have all the problems discussed earlier, in particular that zooming into the images causes pixellation. The only satisfactory answer I have found is to use a **Transparency Scanner**. There are two types of transparency scanner - **Dedicated and Flatbed.**

Dedicated transparency scanners are usually fairly small in size and the good ones are of high quality but expensive. Cheaper versions have become available recently and Amazon and Maplin, and others, offer a couple at around £55 - £65. But when I checked the reviews I found complaints that they were little more than plastic toys which give poor results with a lot of detail lost in the scanned images. So perhaps best avoided.

Dedicated scanners can only scan mounted transparencies or a film strip and are no use for scanning printed materials. They are fine for people who want to create large high quality prints - eg A3 or larger. But for video projects such large images are not required and may be unuseable.

Flatbed scanners can scan ordinary printed materials and have an Adapter for scanning transparencies or film strip. They need not be expensive. £60 to £120 will buy a really good one, with Epson and Canon the main contenders. The backing sheet which holds printed pages in place is removed from the lid of the scanner to reveal a white strip behind which is a lamp to illuminate the transparencies with a suitably balanced white light. The adapter can be positioned so that either a set of mounted transparencies (usually 4-6) can be positioned under the light strip, or it can be moved across to accommodate a film strip. Figs 6 and 7 show an Epson scanner as an example.

Fig 6 - White strip for illuminating transparencies

Fig 7 - Mounted slides in adapter

Once the slides have been mounted in the adapter, you simply close the lid and preview the images in the usual way, then scan them. These scanners usually have an Automatic mode where the software takes care of all the settings for you but manual modes are also available so that you can control the key parameters of the scan.

Once you have scanned the images you import them and put them on the timeline, from where they can be animated as described above. A short clip from the film I made in this way can be seen at *:*
http://ecvs1936.googlepages.com/tutorial_julianalps.htm

I can recommend this approach using a scanner for any project in which you wish to use still images, and especially if there are a lot of them. Using my video camera as a rostrum camera is now a last resort in my projects.

The Making of...”Mind of Obsession”

By Alan Taylor

In December 2007, I was faced with a brief to complete a film between 5 and 10 mins in order to complete my college graded unit. At the time, I had been thinking about producing a film adaptation of Robert Hamer’s ‘Kind Hearts and Coronets’ for fun after viewing the classic six months earlier, being inspired by it’s black comedy and wit. My first larger scale production involved a total cast and crew of twenty which was an overwhelming prospect at the time. The first challenge of making a film involves what we like to call at college, ‘development hell’. This process involves the planning and creation of synopsis and treatments to get an idea for the final shooting script.

Another challenge I faced was adapting the original two hour movie into twenty minutes which ultimately ended

up being thirty. I looked over the film, over and over, taking down notes on which elements I liked and which bits I thought would be too difficult or time consuming to fit into the restricted time period. Looking back on the project, it was too ambitious and this theme was present throughout the production. In January 2007, I had to pitch the idea to my college lecturers and classmates using the treatment and draft scripts which I had put together. The reaction was to

the point; 'interesting idea but are you going to make it in time for the deadline'. The truth of that was yes but only by the scrape of my teeth. The entire production took a total of seven days of shooting which if on a commercial production, would cost thousands. Thankfully for a low budget production where everyone works for free, it ended up being 200 pounds although as the distribution stage continues, there is always the cost of producing dvds, entering competitions and festivals which is an ongoing process.

I learned a great deal in the planning process of filmmaking and for Mind of Obsession, I spent a great deal of time putting together a schedule which included call sheets, a production schedule and travel directions. These proved very effective in ensuring that the cast and crew turned up on time which believe me is a must. Once the script was finalized, I scouted around Edinburgh looking for suitable locations. Using storyboards which I made and taking screen captures from the original film, I could visualize exactly what I wanted. One day at college, my lecturer mentioned that New Battle College might be a great location to use and so I trekked down from my college on a day off college. New Battle had a previous history of helping college students so with some respect and friendliness, they kindly agreed to let us film there providing we don't film the paintings inside for copyright issues which is fair enough. The location looked superb and it really helps to enhance the look of the film to echo the black and white period setting. Another of the locations that worked really well was Duddingston Kirk. I had already met the location owner prior to this film on 'Somebody Wait for Me', a short film which I was involved with for the 48 hour film competition. The owner was so helpful that he even played one of the best characters in the film, the minister.

Something unusual about the film was that it was shot in two periods, the first in March and the second in June, The reason behind this was that I wanted to complete half the film for the college deadline meeting the requirement but still wanted to expand on the film which paid off as the second unit filming was of higher quality than the first. The unit 2 scenes included the church scene, forest encounter and various shots around New Battle for the opening sequence. The cast and crew for Mind of Obsession did a great job of committing themselves to the cause of making the film for free. Willem van Heemstra became the Director of Photography for unit 2 and thanks to him, the film looks much better. It shows what can be achieve using talented team members. The film is full of continuity errors which is something I think occurred through the lack of time I had to spend on casting which would have benefited the production. In future, I would like to carry out auditions to make sure that the casting was correct. For Mind of Obsession, it was a case of ' if you want to be acting in it, then your in'. At the time, I felt pushed to do this to meet the deadline so I'm taking this away with me as a point to learn. The music was composed by Kevin MacLeod who provides royalty free content using the creative commons licence which for amateur filmmaker

costs nothing; Kevin is very prolific and is always making new music. You should check out his page if your looking for a source of music, simple type 'incomptech.com' in google and you'll find it.

For the future of any film, it requires a strong distribution strategy to maintain an audience and interest. I feel this stage is often overlooked but is so important as it allows you to be seen and heard, gaining your next job and project. For Mind of Obsession, I plan to screen it to some low key film clubs and student festivals to gain some feedback but primarily to attract attention to the cast and crew. Using the latest web digital distribution methods such as online video streaming and websites such as without a box, a site which offers uploading to festivals instead of posting, the film will increase it's audience and be seen by as many people as possible.

If you're interested in learning more about how the film was put together, check out a whole selection of bonus making of material which was made during the production of the film including an outtake reek, making of documentary and stills which are online on my youtube page under the Mind of Obsession play-list, here is the address:

www.youtube.com/AlanAndrewTaylor

USING INTERVIEWS TO MAKE A FILM

By Bob Bell

In the February edition of the Film and Video Maker, I read an article by Dave Whitworth FACI(M) where he describes interviewing someone then fitting images to suit the narrative. I would like to expand on this and share my method with you.

When preparing for an interview, I arrange the location so that the subject is sitting in a naturally lit room with daylight from a window shining on one side of his face. This adds a shadow to the frame and, in my opinion, adds character to the film. He sits facing the interviewer and the camera is at an angle, facing slightly to the right or left, with the correct ratio, viz. the interviewee should be two thirds in, looking out towards the majority of the screen. Avoid his looking out to the edge of the screen as this is unnatural.

I place a tie-clip microphone with a radio receiver or wire connection discreetly

on the subject. I then ensure there are no background objects 'protruding' from his head as this is distracting. I make a sound level test, using earphones plugged into the camera, by asking the interviewee to talk for a moment or two. This also helps to settle him down for the actual interview.

It is advisable to have an interviewer sitting out of camera facing the interviewee so that he focuses on the interviewer not on the camera. This also helps to make the interview more relaxed as it is more natural to talk to someone who is concentrating solely on the subject and not on focussing or zooming with the camera.

I start the film with a wide shot of the person and the room surroundings while he is speaking. After about one minute I zoom in slowly and continue changing the focal length throughout the interview. This makes for a more interesting viewing of the final film.

After the interview I take a shot of the interviewer, over the shoulder of the interviewee, nodding and smiling a few times. These are called 'noddy shots' and can be seen in nearly every one-to-one interview. Similarly, I take a few shots of the reverse, over the shoulder of the interviewer to the interviewee. This is just in case they are needed later.

At the editing stage I play back the interview and note any salient points. These include references to subjects where images or moving video can be inserted over the audio, perhaps maps, books, photographs, actual location shots or people. I edit on the Casablanca Avio DV which is ideal for inserting JPEG and MPEG images over the narrative. If using still images I try to either pan or zoom slowly using the computer software as this lends movement to the film. Otherwise, the end result is a series of slides.

The interview can be trimmed by cutting out unnecessary information. The unwanted portion can be removed by splitting the whole scene. Using a crossfade dissolve over the end of one split and the beginning of the next scene or by placing a cutaway shot smoothes out the film. Avoid 'Talking Heads' where the person talks almost continuously without any insertions.

It may be beneficial to use the software's facility of 'colouring to grey' any photograph which might have different tones. Sepia can be made to black and white easily, as can coloured images. It is a personal choice.

My favourite documentary film maker is the American Ken Burns, He has won numerous awards including some for his 11 hour epic on the American Civil War. This was screened over five consecutive evenings on American television in 1990. The film took five years to complete, as long as the War itself. He and his team browsed through one million images of paintings, books, lithographs and newspaper headlines, moving newsreels, battle sites and interviews of historians. First person quotes were superimposed into the finished film.

One of the quotes from Ken Burns is:
"At a number of moments in this film, you suspend your belief that this is a photograph taken three weeks after the Battle of Gettysburg. You actually have the sensation of being there. When that happens, history is running on all cylinders. We have accomplished what we set out to do; to let the material tell its own story."

E.C.V.S. TAPE LIBRARY

by Norman Speirs

This part of the Library started off as VHS with a number of S-VHS tapes being added in later years. The count at present is 90 tapes with a wide variety of types of films included. A few months ago some members noticed a little difficulty in playing some of the tapes, and other tapes had deteriorated with loss of quality in both picture and sound. It was recommended that we should mount a campaign to preserve these films by copying them on to mini DV tape.

Why mini DV and not DVD, I can hear some members cry! Various experts have examined the situation and the latest evidence comes in favour of mini DV tapes on the grounds that there is more likely to be a longer life in the tape than in DVD where the dyes used in the manufacture and recording are less stable.

So I have made a start and have completed more than half of the library tapes. It has been an interesting task, not so much as seeing the films again (I know most of them pretty well) but in trying to improve the quality and restore some of the deficiencies. The Casablanca has been working overtime and many of the films have required colour correction: at this very moment, one film has had to be colour corrected throughout its length and the rendering is progressing steadily — nearly five hours just now, and there is still at least an hour to go! However the result will be worth it.

Not every film can be adequately enhanced. There was one film, which was a video transfer from film, where the sharpness of the image is poor, probably due to a focusing problem at the transfer stage, and nothing can be done to improve it, except by making a new transfer - but the original is now in Glasgow with the Scottish Screen Archive.

Rather than have 90 mini DV tapes in the new library section, I have put several films together on one tape. Four North v. South entries are on one tape, another has five club films. I propose to make a list of all the tapes and the films they contain, which anyone may get merely by asking me. In addition, I hope to have a selection of the films reviewed in successive issues of Cine Chat. Eventually I shall include DVD entries in the Library and make a list of these separately.

REVIEW OF LIBRARY mini DV TAPES

mini DV 1, 2,and 3

These tapes replace ECVS 1 in the VHS range. They were made at the time of our Golden Jubilee in 1986 and show the reception in the City Chambers and our Jubilee Dinner in the Royal College of Physicians with Jimmy Logan as our Guest of Honour. The dinner was followed by entertainment provided by the Melville Music Hall Players and it was all recorded on VHS by Colin Bradfield, one of our members who had more video experience than the rest of us. The tape DV1 has the Reception and the Dinner on it, DV2 is the entertainment, and DV3 is the same as DV1 but I have added captions identifying most of the members who were present at the time.

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Budgie Cup Competition 2009

"Next Generation" By Peter Dick

The Budgie Cup 2009 was held in the ECVS clubrooms on Friday 13th February 2009. Forty-eight entries were received, with a wide variety of subject matter.

This years winner was Peter Dick, with his photo entitled "Next Generation". The runner-up was Norman Speirs for his photo entitled "Crossed Arrows".

Several photos were awarded a commendation, these were; "Mid-Air Refuelling" by Sean Groat, "Canada Goose" by Peter Dick, "Audrey" by Sean Groat, "Colour Match" by Alan Brown and "First Dandelion of Spring" by Peter Dick.

"Crossed Arrows" By Norman Speirs

"Mid-Air Refuelling"

"Audrey"

"Canada Goose"

"Colour Match"

"First Dandelion of Spring"

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E.C.V.S. TAPE LIBRARY

mini DV 4

This tape has five films made by the Society for entry into the North versus South Competition in 1993 to 1997 inclusive. These were made each on a prescribed theme and the films included are: "A Killer Calls" (1993), "Stage Managed" (1994), "Breakdown" (1995), "Deception" (1996), and "Ticket to Dream" (1997). None of them actually won the competition but most reached the final and are enjoyable to watch.

mini DV 5

Four Society films are on this tape. The first, which was the first film actually made on video, is "The Affair at 23A". It was done in 1989-90 and is filmed entirely in our Clubrooms and illustrates the attitude prevalent at the time between the cine and video enthusiasts. The next is "Going, Going, Gone" which was made for the North v. South on the theme – 'The Mind is Master of the Man'. Then come two films for the Strathclyde Event, a S.A.M. interclub competition on a set theme. "The Ring" (on the theme 'The Ring') was practically a one man film by Jeff Robertson, and the last one is "A Clean Break", on the theme 'You'll Never Believe It'.

mini DV 6

Three Newsreels are on this tape covering 1996, 1997 and 1998. At that time we were encouraged to make short films on events happening in the city and these were collated and edited by Ralph Fusco, a stalwart member at the time, and he was our President in 1994-95. These cover events as diverse as the closing of Turnhouse as an RAF unit and the resiting of the Spitfire, the installation of a 13 ton railway locomotive in the Royal Scottish Museum, and the Return of the Stone of Destiny to Scotland.