

Cine

Chat

April 2012

The Journal of Edinburgh
Cine & Video Society
23a Fettes Row, Edinburgh,
EH3 6RH



Strategy Group Report

Pages 4 & 5

When you have eliminated the impossible, ask...

John ‘Sherlock’ Clark

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Budgie Cup Results

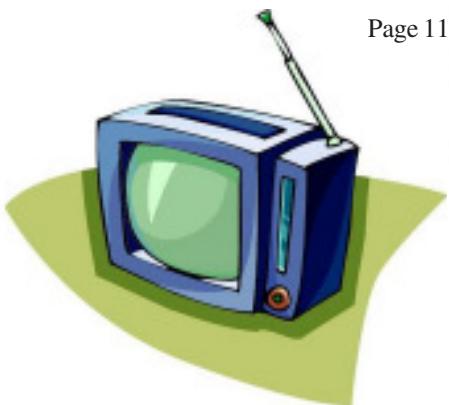
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<http://www.ecvs.co.uk>

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 maintenance 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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About CINE CHAT

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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 its members in particular. Never to cause intentional offence, but not to be afraid of occasional 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 2011 - 2012

President:	Hugh Trevor
Vice-President:	Jim Closs
Past President:	Peter Dick
Secretary:	Alasdair Bryson
Treasurer:	Vic Young
Subscriptions:	Alan Brown



EDITORS COLUMN

Welcome to the April 2012 edition of Cine-Chat. This issue crept up on me a bit, and I write this as the deadline goes whooshing past on the evening of 1st April. That's not to say we haven't had some excellent contributions for this issue, I've just not found the time to edit them!

In this issue we have some of our competition results, for the Budgie Cup, the Choice of the Clubs, and the Pilgrim Trust. Our Annual Competition has taken place, but results for that will be printed next issue (as the audience vote winners are yet to be revealed!), also 'fingers-crossed' for our entry in this years Bridges Trophy Competition, which will be taking place in Dunfermline in the next couple of days.

This issue also sees a report from our Strategy Group, which makes interesting reading, and certainly gives next years committee some food for thought. John Clark dons his deerstalker hat in an article about his trials with satellite TV, and we also have some suggestions regarding reducing Cine-Chat costs, after the recent price-increases by the Royal Mail. As always, if you have any material for inclusion in Cine Chat, please email me at alan@broon.co.uk or drop it in the mail box in the ECVS Clubrooms.

Wishing everyone a great summer, with plenty of film-making opportunities!

Annual General Meeting of Edinburgh Cine and Video Society 2012

The Annual General Meeting of Edinburgh Cine and Video Society will take place in the ECVS Clubrooms at 23a Fettes Row, Edinburgh on Thursday 26th April at 7:30pm

All members are welcome to attend. This will be an opportunity to hear yearly reports from the Society President and Treasurer, and vote in the election of office-bearers for the forthcoming season.

In addition this year, there will be the opportunity to have your say, and vote on the proposed change of name for the Society.

Edinburgh Cine & Video Society Strategy Group Interim Report

The initial request for a strategy to cover the next five years was raised by Cairns Aitken at the 2011 AGM and followed up by two submissions in June 2011 titled, “Some thoughts by Cairns Aitken on future Strategy” and “Some thoughts by Cairns Aitken on Awards”. This reply addresses the first with the latter to be addressed by the committee.

The Strategy Group consisted of Peter Dick, Alasdair Bryson and myself, Stewart Emm. At our first meeting in July 2011 we reviewed the objectives as outlined in the Memorandum of Association of Edinburgh Cine and Video Society. Subsequent to that meeting several ad-hoc discussions had taken place with the ECVS members and are summarised below.

1. Technology

As Cairns correctly identified that evolution of digital technology in the camcorder and still cameras has merged and both have the ability to record video and still images. The sales of compact cameras and consumer camcorders have suffered due to this convergence.

The serious amateur and professional is served by the higher end offering, at a much higher price point, within the prosumer/professional range of video and SLR cameras.

The implications of this trend is that the majority of the young generation use their phones to record both video and stills and upload them to the internet for instant public viewing. There is little skill involved in this process and the inbuilt programs as-

sist in the transfer of digital information to the video hosting sites. So although there is more technology out there to produce more video, the people using it gain access to training material by accessing manufacturers support pages and instructional videos on You Tube etc.

For the above reason a film making club no longer serves as the learning environment for new initiates’ to video production skills. However there are still many individuals in this age group that want to make quality video productions.

2. Social Implications

The membership of the Society has been steadily declining for many years and as Cairns highlights “If the Society does not attract more of them (younger members) to become active members, its very survival is threatened” Another observation made by many is that many people, in the 25-55, are too busy with family and business commitments to undertake other activities. This trend is also affecting many other clubs, who are showing a decline in membership in this age group.

Jim Closs has remarked the largest current growth on the Edinburgh scene is the University of the Third Age (U3A), currently in excess of 1400 members, but this reflects a membership in the 60+ age group, mainly retired with a 60:40 ratio of women to men.

In light of the above it is recommended that a two staged strategy is required, one to attract younger members to the club and another to boost the existing membership by

attracting membership from the same age segment as the Edinburgh U3A.

3. Financial aspects

(a) The forecast core expenditure (covering electricity, rates and insurance) for 2012 is £1927 or and equates to membership contribution of 46 members (at £42/head)

(b) Current subsidies from other non membership income equates to the equivalent of 21 members.

(c) Taking (b) from (c) the minimum number that the membership can decline to before core funding cannot be achieved is 25.

(d) There are additional funds from refreshments, raffles and donations, these are variable in nature and have therefore been omitted from the above analysis.

Suggestions for improving this situation are as follows:

i) Do not increase the membership fee, but go for membership growth.

ii) Constrain costs (very little scope in this area unfortunately)

iii) Maximise income from other sources.

4. Going Forward

The main issues coming out from the above are how do we:

i) Drive membership growth

ii) Improve membership retention

iii) Develop an events programme(s) to support the needs of the individual members and

the Society as a whole.

iv) Develop a communication plan to attract new members

These issues will require to be addressed by the incoming committee after this years AGM, but not to duck the issue here are some personal comments.

1. The title Edinburgh Cine and Video Society is dated and needs to be (to use a hated word) “rebranded” to a more contemporary title.

2. The use of social media to reach the younger age group needs to be investigated and exploited where appropriate.

3. Many of the over 60+ age group do not like going out in the evening, especially in the winter, and maybe an afternoon series of video camera workshops would be attractive to them.

4. The development of a programme that includes more competitions open to all amateur film makers across the Edinburgh and Lothian's may attract individual video producers to enter. This could be linked to 2 above and our website.

5. Set up a membership committee to actively drive the membership growth.

While the above may not address all of Cairns' points it attempts to focus on the main issues that the club needs to address in the next few years. With the rate of change of technology over time it is very difficult to foresee what the future holds, but to prosper and survive we need to be aware of change and be flexible enough to adapt to it.

Stewart Emm

Just a Problem or Two

Sherlock Holmes famously claimed

that in deducing the solution to a problem, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatsoever is left must be the answer”. Sherlock was wrong, as by eliminating the impossible you can be left with a number of possibles of which one or more, either independently or in unison, might be the answer; but then Sherlock didn’t have to solve the problems of electronic devices.

From the moment I opened my new TV package I sensed problems were looming. [Okay, it all took place a couple of years back, but I thought you might like to be aware of the nature of my problems, as we can learn from the mistakes of others]. I also think we are probably aware that nowadays we don’t have to look for problems; they come knocking on our doors.

The installation instructions told me to attach the LCD TV to its base unit as a safety measure. A safety strap and a wood screw were supplied for the job - the base unit however, was made from metal and glass. Ignoring this impossible safety task I pressed on with the installation and in the process pulled a back muscle when lifting the TV on to the base unit. Looking at it I couldn’t have guessed it would be so heavy and awkward to lift.

by John L Clark



Two pages of the instruction booklet were devoted to a range of configurations for connecting digi-boxes, players, recorders and camcorders etc. Having connected my hardware I tuned in the built-in Freeview unit, which seemed to go well, although it only managed to access 74 channels rather than the 140 or so I had expected. I moved on to access my satellite unit, which seemed to go equally well. I then thought it was time to watch a Freeview program to decide how I felt about widescreen viewing. It didn’t take me long to decide that I didn’t feel at all good, and it wasn’t caused by my aching back.

The tuner offered five aspect ratios to choose from: Smart, Wide, 4:3, 14:9 and Zoom: I had chosen Smart. The channel I selected was showing a weather forecast and the first image to appear on my screen was a slightly built weather



girl whom I barely recognised, although I had often enough seen her in the past. Her weight now appeared to have ballooned, at a guess, to well over 20 stones; in addition the UK weather map didn't much resemble the UK, it was more like the US. I quickly selected 4:3; the screen collapsed horizontally, the weather girl turned slightly built again and the weather map resembled the UK. I then thought, wait a minute; I bought a wide-screen TV and here I am watching a 4:3 picture. Surely this can't be right.

I then switched to the satellite: immediately I had the feeling that all was not well. The channel I had selected was starting to show an American movie and as the title appeared the first and last letters were missing from the wide screen. I quickly switched to 4:3, but still they were missing. The title faded and it was too late to try other formats, however I was later to find it didn't matter which format I used the problem was still present. No denying this was a setback. It was then I decided to apply my almost forgotten technical, problem solving practice, Rule 1, sit down with a cup of coffee and assess the problem from various angles. By the time the coffee was finished I had eliminated the impossible and identified two separate unrelated 'possibles', hopefully the answer would come later from one of

those. In the event it was to be much later.

In tackling the reduced number of Freeview channels; the first 'possible' was that my aerial might be out of alignment. Using a satellite navigation unit I found it to be 575 feet above sea level. The transmitter, some nine or ten miles away, is much lower and was line-of-sight before the house opposite was built, alas, no longer so! Just in case the new digital transmitter was lower down the mast I tilted my terrestrial aerial downward. The change made absolutely no difference. I had eliminated one 'possible' as my aerial was well enough aligned: my next 'possible' was that the digital bandwidth might by some other means be restricted, but how? The tuner is built

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THE BUDGIE CUP COMPETITION 2012

This years Budgie Cup Competition was held in the ECVS Clubrooms on Friday 17th February 2012. Our judge, Toby Sigouin, commented on the high standard of entries this year, and awarded several Highly Commended Awards as well as selecting an overall winner.



"Red Admiral" by Bryce Morrison



"I cry all day and nobody listens"
by David Lind



"Not Listening" by David Lind



"Midsummer Noctilucent Clouds"
by Peter Dick

Across these two pages, we present a selection of the Highly Commended entries, as well as this years runner-up, "Next...Sunset Prayers Maghrib", by Peter Dick and winner "It's home from fishing we go" by Bryce Morrison.



"Watch the Birdie" by Pauline Johnston



"Horse" by Cairns Aitken



“Waiting for Her Majesty”
by Sean Groat



“Contentment” by Alan Brown

RUNNER-UP



“Next... Sunset Prayers Maghrib” by Peter Dick

THE BUDGIE CUP 2012 WINNING PHOTOGRAPH



“It’s home from fishing we go” by Bryce Morrison

into the TV and unlikely to be causing the problem. The coaxial cable is pretty long; although this might attenuate the signal strength it is not going to affect the bandwidth, and my terrestrial aerial is an efficient wide band digital array.

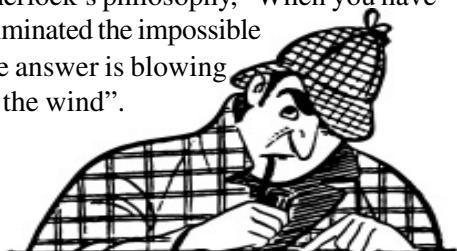
As time passed I dropped the Freeview problem. I felt I had reached the point where for the time being at least the answer was beyond my grasp. Applying Rule 2, don't get bogged down, I moved on to the satellite problem. None of the formats available to me prevented the cropping of film titles and later I began to notice that in interviews, while the interviewer was present on the screen most of the interviewee was missing. At first I had put this down to sloppy camera work, only later to realise it was related to the cropped title problem.

That evening my daughter paid a visit and as she admired the new TV remarked, it's a shame to keep that old video recorder, it's black when everything else is silver. As I looked across at my old editing VCR it was then the penny dropped. Yes, you've guessed it; she had inadvertently given me the answer to why I had 74 instead of about 140 channels. The terrestrial aerial was plugged into the analogue VCR and looped through to the digital TV's coaxial input socket. The VCR's analogue amplifier was obviously restricting the digital bandwidth required by the TV. I almost ran across

the room, unplugged the coaxial from the VCR and plugged it directly into the TV. Re-tuning only took a few minutes, and then lo and behold I had 147 channels. The Freeview problem was solved.

The following day after a bit more thought on the cropping problem and eliminating the impossible I came round to an almost unthinkable 'possible', my digital satellite receiver must be the culprit. The solution to that was Rule 3, try component substitution. After some persuasion and overcoming his doubts I managed to borrow a neighbour's later version satellite receiver and viewing card. Quick substitution showed there was no horizontal cropping, proof that my own satellite receiver was indeed the culprit. To replace it would cost around a £120: the alternative was to live with the problem. I decided to live with the problem on a temporary basis, as at that time I was considering other plans for satellite TV.

If there is anything to be learned from this tale, apart from Sherlock getting his philosophy wrong, it has to be don't mix analogue and digital kit as there are bound to be problems. And before you call a service man it's as well to remember there is an update to Sherlock's philosophy, "When you have eliminated the impossible the answer is blowing in the wind".



The Pilgrim Trust Competition

2012 Results

The entries this year were of an extremely high standard and this year's Judge, Susan Moore, provided a video with her comments and also announced the winner. This was shown after the Pilgrim Trust viewing on Thursday, 29th March at the ECVS Clubrooms.

The final results for this year's competition were as follows:

The 2012 Winner of the Pilgrim Trust Competition was:

“Different Tracks”
by Robert Letham

A Certificate for Highly Commended was awarded to:

“Gannet Lady”
by Hugh Trevor



Pilgrim Trust Winner Robert Letham receives his award from ECVS President Hugh Trevor

Thank you once again to all those who took part in the 31st Pilgrim Trust Competition.

Looking into the future let's make 2014 a special year for the Pilgrim Trust as it is the year of the Commonwealth Games and the referendum on the Independence issue! In the meantime there is always the 2013 competition to refine your film making skills!

CHOICE OF THE CLUBS COMPETITION 2012

The result of this years Choice of the Clubs Competition was announced in the ECVS clubrooms on 23rd February, after the ECVS viewing (and voting) had taken place. CineChat is pleased to announce that ECVS won the trophy this year, with our entry “The Duel” by Alan Brown. The final rankings were as follows:

1st	Edinburgh Cine and Video Society	“The Duel”
2nd	Perth Moviemakers	“Another Year”
3rd	Largs Videomakers	“The Stowaway”
4th	Dundee Camcorder Club	“It’s Downhill All The Way”
5th	Carlisle & Borders Camcorder	“True Love Prevails”
6th	Monklands Camcorder Club	“Nevis Ice Climb”
7th	Ayrshire Camcorder Club	“Keswick Jazz ad Scenery”
8th	Stewartry Camcorder Club	“Sir William Douglas Estate”
9th	Northern Ireland Camcorder Club	“The Date”

ECVS..‘FILM..IN..AN..EVENING’..NIGHT

By Alan Brown

On Thursday 22nd March 2012, E.C.V.S held a ‘Make a Film in an Evening’ night. We’ve held evenings like this in the past, but not for several years as the general consensus has been that it’s not possible to make an interesting film in such a short space of time.

Undeterred, our Thursday night members decided to concentrate on making a very short, 1 minute film, as it was still felt that while we might not make a competition-winning film, it would be an interesting experiment from which no doubt lessons could be learnt!

It was with this in mind, that Jim Closs selected four jokes from a joke book, which he thought (with some slight re-writing of dialogue) could be made into very short films.

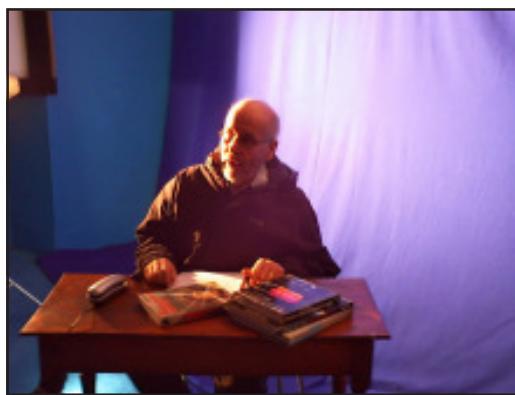
After some group discussion at the start of the evening, it was decided to split into two teams. One team would work in the front room, and the other in the blue room.



Alasdair Bryson and Jim Closs fine-tune the script

We also decided to choose three of the jokes to be made into films.

The jokes which were finally used will be revealed at a future screening, but we successfully made three films during the evening, two of approximately 30 seconds long, and one of 51 seconds. These shorter films always come in useful when creating compilations of films, such as for the Bridges Trophy Competition etc. They also act as good films for inclusion on the club website, where viewers are probably looking for shorter examples of our work.



Brian Whitnell was required to perform his lines in front of our chromakey screen

I was in the group which was working in the blue room. Our film required two actors, and two locations, a bedroom and a library. Hugh Trevor kindly volunteered to play the role of the (in bed) librarian, and Brian Whitnell the part of the late night caller.

With the use of a table and some curtains, we made Hugh a (not very comfortable) bed. Bob Bell directed the film, and had brought along a number of props to make the set more believeable. By using a tight angle on

Hugh's bedroom scene, I think we managed to make it quite convincing. This scene was quite brightly lit, and as producer I later applied digital filters to make the scene darker, and more like a bedroom at night. I think this worked much better than attempting to film in low-light conditions live, as there was no grainyness of the (high definition) image to deal with.

For Brian's scenes, we used the bluescreen, and superimposed a library background. Bob had previously filmed a selection of library backgrounds, but these were in standard definition format. While this shouldn't matter (as we intended to render the final film in standard definition anyway), we learnt that mixing resolutions like this on chromakeyed footage doesn't look very convincing. For that reason, we used an alternative high-definition image for the background, which blended in with our high-definition foreground much better. Something we will bear in mind next time!



We decided to light Brian's Chromakey scene with a small portable floodlight, as well as our standard lighting. The portable flood was placed behind Brian to appear to be light from a window, and I think this worked well in the final cut. It also helped to define the edges of our chromakey foreground, giving a



cleaner chromakey effect.

We took a few takes of Brian's scene, with various combinations of zoom etc. In the event however, we went with a static medium shot, because we found that zooming while using chromakey spoils the illusion. In future, if attempting a change of zoom while using a chromakey effect, we would use a cut away shot, and return to the blue-screen shot after the zoom had taken place.

Both groups were finished filming by 9:30pm and we were able to have a discussion of how the evening had gone over a cup of tea.

The original intention had been to also attempt to edit the footage on the evening, however even with these short 1-minute films, this was found not to be feasible. Instead, both groups assigned a producer to perform the editing at home. By the time you read this, we shall hopefully have shown the films at a club night, and you'll be able to judge the results of our efforts.

Regardless of the final films produced however, I think that everyone learnt a lot through this group exercise, and learning through our mistakes is something we can all benefit from, regardless of whether we are a newcomer to the hobby or seasoned film-maker!

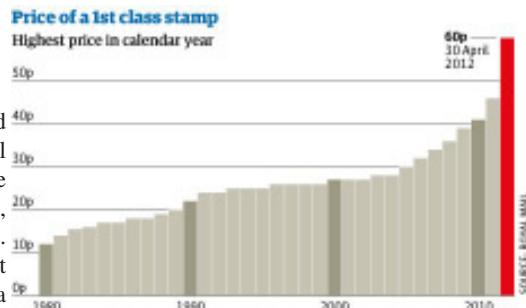
VISITING SPEAKERS

On Thursday 29th February 2012, ECVS members were treated to a visit from John Willams and his friend Nick. John is freelance and does a lot of work for the Church of Scotland. He is in charge of all the recording etc, and broadcasting for the General Assembly which he explained involves 5 HD cameras, all day, over 5 or 6 days a week. The two speakers arrived with a large amount of their equipment to demonstrate, and showed us how they work with the vast amount of footage generated by a multi-camera shoot. They told some anecdotes about the trials and tribulations of producing live video feeds in the Scottish Parliament. Although much of their equipment was well outwith the financial reach of most amateur film-makers, it was particularly interesting to hear how the professionals often encounter similar problems to us, and how they deal with them!



CINE-CHAT DELIVERY!

Readers may recently have been alarmed to hear that the end of this month will see the Royal Mail increase the price of a 1st class stamp from 46p to 60p, and a 2nd class stamp from 36p to 50p. Generally, only one issue of CineChat finds itself sent to members homes via the Royal Mail, that being the September Issue, just prior to the start of our new season, however, with current membership levels, the cost of the postage alone for this would be £15. In an effort to reduce costs therefore, we're introducing new ways for you to get hold of the latest edition of Cine-Chat.



Option 1: You can receive an electronic copy (PDF file) of Cine-Chat sent directly to your email address as soon as it's ready.

Option 2: You can collect your own paper copy of Cine-Chat from the clubrooms the next time you visit.

Option 3: You can receive an electronic copy of Cine-Chat **AND** collect a paper copy from the clubrooms.

Option 4: You can continue to receive your paper copy of Cine-Chat sent to your home address outwith the current season, with a copy left in the clubrooms during the season

There will be no charge for any of these options, and **all members will be automatically placed on Option 2 by default**. If you would like to change the way you receive Cine-Chat, please email alan@broon.co.uk with your new preference or leave a note in the box outside the cinema in the clubrooms, labelled 'CineChat'.

Next Issue

The next issue of CineChat is (tentatively) scheduled for October 2012, if you have any articles, letters, advertisements for inclusion, they would be very welcome. The deadline for submission (either electronically, or in hard-copy) for the next issue is:

Friday 14th September 2012



