

Cine

Chat

October 2012

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



The ECVS name stays!

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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 2012 - 2013

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| President: | Jim Closs |
| Vice-President: | Bryce Morrison |
| Past President: | Hugh Trevor |
| Secretary: | Alasdair Bryson |
| Treasurer: | Vic Young |
| Subscriptions: | Alan Brown |

EDITORS COLUMN



Welcome to the 2012 - 2013 Season at ECVS, and to another issue of Cine-Chat!

The new season kicks off this year on Thursday the 27th September, with '*The President Presents...*', with this years ECVS President, Dr Jim Closs. Jim has of course been a member of ECVS for many years, and is a very well known and respected film-maker, so this opening night is sure to be one not to be missed!

The rest of the season too promises a varied selection of material, hopefully

appealing to a wide range of interests. One of the early highlights will be the showing of our 75th Anniversary Film (on the 11th and 12th October) which celebrates the changes in film making techniques over the past 75 years in ECVS. Help yourself to a copy of our full 2012 - 2013 programme in the ECVS clubrooms, or from the club website, at:

www.ECVS.co.uk

Some of you will have received this issue of Cine Chat electronically. In an attempt to keep our production and distribution costs down, and in the face of rising Royal Mail postal charges, we have decided to make Cine Chat available both electronically (via email and the website) and hardcopy (you can still pick up a paper copy of each issue from the clubrooms). We'll continue to send paper copies to members who have no access to email or the internet - if you'd like it set electronically instead - please let us know your email address!

Thanks to all those who contributed articles to this issue, if you have any comments or suggestions for subjects you would like to see covered in future issues, please let me know. I hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to seeing you in the coming season.



PILGRIM TRUST AWARD 2013

The Pilgrim Trust Award Competition for 2013 will be held on Thursday 28th March, 2013 at 7.30pm in the Edinburgh Cine and Video Society Clubrooms.

Entries are now invited for the competition (closing date Friday 22nd February 2013) and entry forms can be obtained from the ECVS website, or by contacting Hugh Trevor.



A Trip Down Memory Lane

with Bryce Morrison

Most digital cameras, whether video or still, now use miniature cards to store their images although some have built in memory available as well.

I intend to speak mainly of SD (secure digital) and CF (compact flash) formats but over the last 20 years there have been a number of other varieties. Sony have made various MS (Memory Stick) cards in formats that were proprietary to them. Their cameras can still accept these but in recognition of market standards their current models can now also accept the SD range of cards. Olympus and Fuji favoured an XD format card but in the last year or two they have now dropped it completely and they too have joined the SD club.

The CF format has been around for about 15 years. It has tended to be the professional format with SD, which came along a year or two later, being the more usual amateur version.

There are many ways of categorising the cards. The physical size is the most obvious one. The illustration shows from left to right a CF card, an SD card, a memory stick, an XD card and a micro SD card. The last, which is finger nail size, is more commonly used in mobile phones but with a push towards slim pocketable cameras some now use that smaller size too. There



Memory cards come in a variety of shapes and sizes

was also a mini version of the SD card briefly marketed but it was quickly overtaken by the micro version.

Brand name is another obvious way to differentiate with names like SanDisk, Samsung and Panasonic dominating the market. Even if their name is not on the card they may well have made it or some of its internals. There are strict industry standards designed to ensure compatibility between brands but that does not mean that all cards are equal in that speed and quality standards may vary. It has been estimated that there are some 400 different brands with over 8,000 models!

The next obvious characteristic is storage capacity. My first CF card had a capacity of 32 MB which was sufficient for about 10 still photographs. SDHC cards can now store up to 32 GB. So in 10 years there has been a thousand fold increase and it does not end there. The original SD card had an architecture that allowed up to 2GB, the HC (high capacity) version extended that to 32

GB and the latest SDXC type has a theoretical size limit of 2 terabytes! In current practical terms 64GB and 128GB are available with the latter costing a three figure sum. CF cards currently go up to 132 GB. I am not convinced though that bigger is always better and say two 16GB ones might be safer than one 32GB one. As a rough rule of thumb each 8GB would give me one hour of high definition video and cards can be swapped over in a matter of seconds. Prices are coming down all the time and there is not a lot of difference in the cost per GB on card sizes at 8GB, 16GB or 32GB. I see a risk of having a lot of eggs in one tiny basket should the camera get stolen or should one of the relatively small cards decide to get itself lost.

Perhaps the most important attribute of a card for the purposes of taking video is its speed. Solid state of course means that it is “fast” but high definition video requires a considerable amount of data to be continuously written away very quickly. As well as their actual memory, the cards have built in controllers that have to receive, check and decide where to store the information and then it has to be “flashed” onto the appropriate bits of the memory chip. This multi-stage process means that writing is slower than the subsequent reading back of the information and yet some manufacturers cunningly quote the higher “read” speed. Also confusingly there are multiple ways in which the manufacturers describe the card’s speed. It might be as megabytes per second (MB/s) or it might be as an X (times) rating or there might be a “C” class description.

The clearest rating is probably the MB/s one as long as it quotes both the write and the read speeds. The X times rating is just a different way of representing this speed

relating it back to how much faster it is than the original CD transfer speed of 150KB/s. The simplest one to grasp is probably the class rating. The original SD cards might have been considered class 2 although the lowest classification actually seen printed on cards is class 4. At least class 6 is recommended for HD in the AVCHD format and in fact class 10 is becoming a normal standard for video. The camera can interrogate the card for its capacity and rating and disallow recording if it is not compatible. My 2008 vintage Canon has told me once or twice that the card was not what it said on the label! Even it got confused though when class 10 cards first came in because it only understood single digits and thought that I was trying to feed it a class 1 card. Fortunately Canon caught up a few months later and issued a firmware update for the



camera that allowed it to happily see and use the class 10 ones.

So what do the C class ratings actually mean? Basically class 6 says that you can write to the card at at least 6 MB/s and for class 10 at at least 10MB/s but the better brands will give you significantly better than that. For example a card capable of a minimum write speed of 15MB/s would still only have a C rating of 10.

SDXC cards tend to have much faster

transfer speeds of up to 45 MB/s and have a new U (ultra high speed) rating but be aware that although physically the same size they use a different interface. If the camera does not specifically say that it handles SDXC cards do not attempt to insert one. Also note that while all computers will happily speak with an SDHC card they may need an upgrade to handle SDXC.



The U-I rating is filtering down to SDHC cards as well now but to take advantage of the higher speed the camera itself must have the higher speed bus interface. This is probably only needed for professional SLRs taking fast sequences of high definition stills. The SD association though are not resting on their laurels with the now defined UHS-II rated cards having theoretical transfer speeds of a staggering 312 MB/s. They are obviously trying to win over CF card users but when ultra high definition video comes along, as no doubt it will, the memory cards will be there to support it.

With memory cards it is definitely worth shopping around but there are risks in buying down to a price. The Channel Islands used to be a good source but with the closing of the low value VAT loophole earlier this year they now longer have that advantage. Amazon is well worth checking and could well save 50% or more on local shops even when they are offering bundled “bargains” with a camera. (In a tough market place the shops may well look to

make more profit on cards than they do on the camera itself.) In the case of eBay purchases ensure that it is a UK based dealer with a good feedback rating selling the card in a retail pack to avoid the possibility of Hong Kong counterfeits. Test it right away when you get it because if you have any problems or doubts you can return it within 7 days under the distance selling regulations.

Although cards come preformatted most camera manufacturers recommend that the card is formatted in their camera before first use and again if you decide to re-use the card. As with a computer hard drive if there is a lot of deleting of files the data may end up getting fragmented and the card could become slightly slower but the defragmenting used on hard drives is not recommended for flash drives. There are theoretical limits to the number of read write cycles on a given area of card and the card controller has a built in logic to try to share out the usage evenly. In practical terms a good quality card

should be able to handle a hundred thousand reads and writes to an area and so this is unlikely to give any cause for concern.

The cards are physically quite robust and have no problems with extremes of heat and cold. Samsung in particular advertise their cards as being shock, water and x-ray proof. I can vouch for one surviving an accidental washing machine cycle and the contents remaining readable.

Cards have not been around for long enough to be sure of their archival qualities. In theory the charge on a given “bit” can slowly leak away but I can remember in my computer days that tapes were supposed to be re-spooled every 6 months and re-written every year to be safe. Just recently I had the task of digitising a 40 year old tape recording and in spite of it never having been used in all that time it transferred perfectly. Just out of interest I have read back photos from a 10 year old card with no problem. It is probably academic anyway because making copies to hard disk or other media is so quick and easy. My Canon even prompts me to “backup regularly” when it sees material that I have not transferred to my computer. Again going back to my computer days we always had extra copies that were stored somewhere safe miles away. In the digital age there is no degradation between original and copy and hard disk costs per GB are now very low so there is really no excuse for not creating a safety copy (or two).

When transferring the data to a computer there are usually two choices. The camera can be linked to the computer with a USB cable or the card can be removed from the camera and plugged into the computer either directly or through an USB adapter costing just a couple of pounds. Again many cameras have an HDMI lead option for playing back directly onto a flat screen TV. Many laptops now have

SD card slots and so also do TVs, video recorders and Blu-Ray players but to play back video the TV etc must “understand” the encoding used. Playing back basic JPEG photos should display fine as should MPEG video but AVCHD high definition files could present problems with brands other than Sony and Panasonic (who invented the standard).

The cards are fitted with physical write protection switches and, as a last resort, if something is accidentally deleted there are recovery programs that can do their best to restore the information again.

I have tended to focus on SD cards but CF cards have developed in parallel and are the format of choice in professional equipment both still and video. They are seen as being more robust and generally have faster transfer speeds but they are also much more expensive and some cameras now have dual slots to offer a choice of these two formats.

What of the future?

2012 has seen the launch of a new version of the SD card with built in Wi-Fi but this is likely to be an expensive way to go compared with the camera manufacturers building it in as they have now started to do. It does not take much of a jump from that to have the camera having an internet connection and all photos and videos being stored on a remote server somewhere in what is now popularly being called the Cloud. In the past, with still and cine cameras having had distinct film formats (ignoring 35mm) the equipment tended to be single purpose but with video cameras, still cameras and smart phones using the same storage media there will be a continued merging of the capabilities of these devices.

That will be a topic for a November evening!

Meet The Committee 2012 - 2013



Jim Closs
President

Jim prefers making documentaries but sometimes has a go at one-minute videos which he sees as a real challenge. As a keen hillwalker he also combines both hobbies by making occasional mountaineering videos.



Bryce Morrison
Vice-President

Bryce enjoys both video and still photography. Many of the films that he makes are of the newsreel type recording events in and around Edinburgh. Over the Autumn and Winter months Bryce shows both his own and feature films in a local Care Home.



Vic Young
Treasurer

As Treasurer, Vic maintains an iron grip on the purse strings and the finances of ECVS. A keen diver, Vic is our resident authority on under-water filming techniques and is also involved in various club films and projects.



Alasdair Bryson
Secretary

Alasdair has been a member of ECVS for several years, this year he continues in the role of ECVS Club Secretary. As such Alasdair does an excellent job of minuting all the committee meetings and undertaking all the club correspondance.



Alan Brown
Membership Secretary

Alan has been a member of ECVS for the past 9 years and is currently the Membership Secretary and also the editor of Cine-Chat. Alan enjoys experimenting with a range of special effects - usually with mixed results!



Hugh Trevor
Past-President

Hugh has been a member of ECVS for about 11 years, including 7 years as our club secretary. Last year Hugh was the club President, and therefore this year he takes the role of Past-President. Hugh enjoys making are travel films and documentaries.

Meet The Committee 2012 - 2013



Peter Wilson
Committee Member

Peter is widely considered one of the leading movie buffs, historians, collectors and presenters of cinema in E.C.V.S. Catch him in action on Friday nights!



Bob Bell
Committee Member

Bob has served on the Committee in a range of roles for several years, and is involved in many club projects and events. Bob enjoys documentary film-making and researching local history. Bob can always be relied upon to come up with new and interesting ideas.



Peter Dick
Committee Member

As well as being actively involved in the running of the club, Peter is also a prolific winner of awards and has a keen interest in photography as well as film making.



Sean Groat
Committee Member

Sean has been an active member of ECVS for several years and has produced a large number of excellent, award-winning films. Sean is also always keen to get involved in club film-making projects.



Brian Whitnell
Committee Member

Brian has recently joined the ECVS Committee, but has been an active film maker for many years, previously being a member of the White Rose (Thirsk) Camcorder Club. His debut performance at ECVS was in the short film 'Opening Hours', where he played a man locked in a library overnight!

Committee Vacancies

We still have a few vacancies on the committee this year. All ECVS members are entitled to stand for election onto the committee, so if you would be interested in getting involved, please approach a committee member for details!

Inexpensive Camera Shoulder Support

by Jim Closs

The modern trend has for some time been towards smaller and smaller cameras - the kind you can stick in your pocket and not worry about the weight you are carrying. I have never liked these cameras. It seems to me that the laws of physics and human biology combine to require a certain amount of weight in a camera if you are going to be able to hold it steady. With very small cameras, especially when zoomed in, camera shake and wobbly pictures are inevitable. So even when choosing a camera small enough to take on walking holidays, I have always made sure it has enough weight for me to have a chance of holding it steady.

But my preference would always be to have a shoulder mounted camera. These are big and relatively heavy but the weight makes them stable and having them on the shoulder is the next best thing to being on a tripod, and much more flexible. They are ideal for tracking action and I have used mine for filming everything from jousting tournaments to airshows. If I could only have one camera I would always want it to be shoulder mounted. Unfortunately, at today's prices, I find I can't afford one.

This is where shoulder supports come in. Buy a smaller camera and mount it on a shoulder support to stabilise it. There are many of these around but I have always found them either cheap and ineffective or good but unaffordable. During a recent web trawl I accidentally came across the



The Koolertron Camcorder Shoulder Support Bracket

"Koolertron Camcorder Shoulder Support Bracket" - price £17 from Amazon (£27 after p&p etc).

The design looked sensible and at that price I thought it was worth the risk of buying for trying so bought one from Amazon. I am impressed. The design is very simple but it really works! I loaded it up with my Canon XHA1, which is about the same size as the camera pictured here, and it was rock steady. You could film for hours and get good stable pictures. It also comes with adapter plates to take small cameras as well. If, like me, you can't afford a shoulder mounted camera you might want to have a look at this at:-

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Koolertron-Camcorder-Shoulder-Support-Bracket/dp/B007CF6BRM>

PS: Today Amazon seem to be offering it at nearer to £12 !!!!!

The Sirui T-005 Tripod

A Review by Hugh Trevor

On my recent trip to Holland I had the misfortune to lose my rather nice Manfrotto tripod. I was going everywhere by scooter (having rented a 50cc machine in Amsterdam) with my two small bags strapped behind my drivers seat, and my camera bag, with my camcorder, camera, map case, etc stuffed inside, slung over my shoulder. I was constantly stopping to take footage of this or that activity, and as my tripod, though smaller than many with 4 sections in the legs rather than the normal three, would not fit into my camera bag I



had it strapped on top of my baggage. But one day, mid-way through my trip and on a longer section of travel than most, one time when I stopped for a rest, I was 'gob-smacked' to see that the tripod was no longer there. I still can't understand how it could have come out from the strapping – it must have been due to the fairly frequent bumps – but the fact remained that it was gone, and I had come far too far that day to retrace my journey in the hope of finding where it might have fallen. There was nothing to do except continue my journey, thinking I would need to hold the camcorder extra steady when next I had something to shoot, and to look again in Jessops when I got back. I had two towns to visit that day, having been recommended as being attractive traditional Dutch architecture – one quite small and the other a little bigger. In the second of these towns when wandering round, I saw a camera shop and asked about tripods, but they had the usual selection of what I would describe as rather large or rather heavy – nothing at all of what would suit me. After further strolling round the town, which did not seem all that visually attractive, I went down one more road before taking to my scooter again and there was another camera shop. And in this one, when I mentioned how I had just lost my tripod, the owner produced one of a sort I had never seen (or

material Aluminium



5



1305mm/
51.4in



22mm/
0.87in



480mm/
18.9in



10mm/
0.39in



300mm/
11.8in



260mm/
10.2in



1130mm/
44.6in

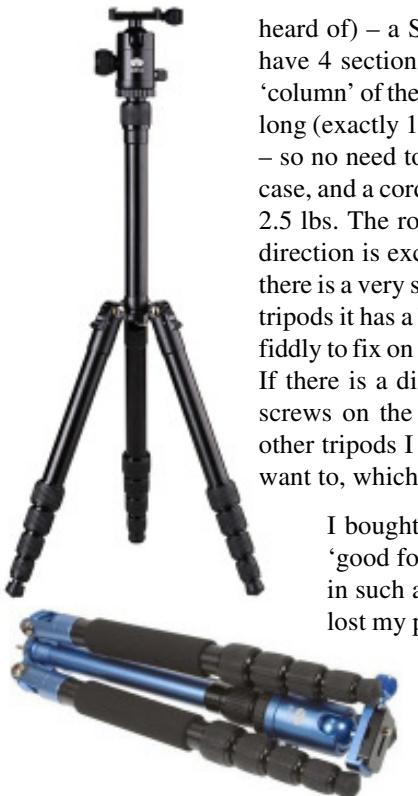


0.8kg/
1.8lbs



4kg/
8.8lbs





heard of) – a Sirui. And it is marvellous. Not only do the legs have 4 sections, but the legs all fold upwards to lie along the ‘column’ of the tripod, making it exceptionally short – just 30cms long (exactly 1 foot) – short enough to fit inside my camera bag – so no need to tie on anywhere. It comes with a canvas cover case, and a cord to make for easy carrying. The weight is a mere 2.5 lbs. The rotary action for swivelling the camcorder in any direction is excellent - smoother than my Manfrotto was – and there is a very smooth horizontal movement for a pan. Like most tripods it has a bit to screw on the camcorder, and it is a bit more fiddly to fix on to the tripod than was the case with the Manfrotto. If there is a disadvantage at all, I have found that the bit that screws on the camcorder comes loose more easily than with other tripods I have had in the past, but I can screw tighter if I want to, which should cure that.

I bought the tripod there and then, hardly believing my ‘good fortune’ in having found such a good replacement in such an unlikely place, just on the very day that I had lost my previous one. It cost about £100, but I consider it worth it. The strange thing is that, in our club, I have never heard of a Sirui tripod before. I can certainly recommend it to others for its compactness and convenience.

How Cine-Chat may have looked, had the AGM passed the controversial name-change motion

Controversial ECVS Name Change Motion defeated by AGM

Thursday 26th of April 2012 saw ECVS hold its Annual General Meeting, and this year promised to be one of our more controversial AGMs, with a motion to change the name of the society being tabled. The name of the society has been debated for several years now, with some members feeling it has become outdated. On the opposite side of the fence, however, there are many members who feel the club name preserves and marks our enviable history as the oldest amateur film making society in Scotland. After some interesting discussion from both sides the AGM voted to preserve the name for the foreseeable future.

ECVS 75th Anniversary DVD

by Jim Closs



The session 2011-2012 marked the 75th Anniversary of our Club/Society. As most members will know, originally founded as the 'Waverley Cine Society' it later became 'Edinburgh Cine Society' and much later - 'Edinburgh Cine & Video Society'. To mark the 75th anniversary, ECVS Committee agreed that a short film should be made and appointed Bob Bell and myself to manage the project. Bob had already produced a DVD for the club's 70th Anniversary which celebrated that occasion with an hour's worth of films made by club members. So how should we approach the project this time round?

It seemed to me that this was an opportunity to look back at how film making has changed over the past 75 years and a chance to show a few examples of early and recent films. I also had a personal objective of trying to include as many of our current club members in the project as possible, either by involving them in doing some of the filming or appearing in scenes - with 'Hitchcock' style walk-on parts. I thought it would be good to show who the current club members are and what they look like! Sadly, we don't know what the 1936 members looked like.

I produced an outline script and shooting plan. Emails and letters were circulated to all club members inviting them to get involved. Filming was targeted on an evening session at Fettes Row towards the end of May and I would like to thank all those who turned up on that occasion. It may have seemed a bit disorganised at the time but a lot of valuable footage was shot on that evening and it forms the core of the finished film.



It also seemed important to show how changes in technology over the years have influenced how films have been produced. This meant illustrating how cine films were made - a process many of our members have actually never been involved in. Then showing the tape-based and solid state high definition video equipment and software of today, including areas such as stop-motion and computer generated animation - as well as time lapse videography. To this end I filmed a number of club members in their homes, with their cameras and editing software, to illustrate how we go about

film making today.

The result is a 23 minute film titled 'ECVS 75th Anniversary Film' and I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to everyone who contributed to the making of it - even if that was only to walk past the camera at the right time!

The DVD also includes a few examples of what I have called 'Early' and 'Recent' films by club members. I am indebted to Norman for his advice on a choice of the early films. There are four of these which run from 11 mins to 18 mins each, making just under an hour's viewing time in total. Bob and I also made a selection of recent films, with running times from 1 minute up to 13 minutes.



The outcome is a DVD with around 2 hours viewing time, with a menu which allows viewers to dip in and out of early and recent films as they wish. I hope that club members will find it both interesting and enjoyable.

What are the 'Early' and 'Recent' films on the DVD?? For the answer you will have to come to the club on Thursday 11th October, when the DVD will be presented to the club audience. Time won't allow for all of the films to be shown: just a selection. But after that presentation the DVD will be made available to all club members who will be able to view it at their leisure and reflect on how ECVS has grown and changed over the past 75 years.

Hope you can come to see it
on 11th October!

An illustration of a man with a large mustache, wearing a military-style uniform with a peaked cap and a sword belt. He is pointing his right index finger directly at the viewer. Below him, the word "YOU" is written in large, bold, serif capital letters, with a small crown icon above the letter "A".

Annual Competition 2012 - The Results



ECVS President, Hugh Trevor, thanks this years Annual Competition Judges Ken and Jean McRonald.

The ECVS Annual Competition was held in the ECVS clubrooms on Thursday 15th March and Friday 16th March 2012. This years judges were Ken and Jean McRonald. Once again this year, the standard of entries was extremely high, and the Judges had a hard task to pick a winner. The top award was eventually awarded to Hugh Trevor, for his excellent documentary, 'The Gannet Lady'.

Top Film (Lizars Trophy)

Runner-up (50th Anniversary Prize)

Best Documentary
Best Travel Film
Best Imagination
Best Sound
Best Editing
Scotia Quaich
Best Holiday Film
Best Comedy
Best Animation
Judges Choice

The Gannet Lady

RET

The Gannet Lady
Heli Hike
Gorf's Acorn Adventure
RET
The Gannet Lady
RET
Barbary Squirrels
Talking Hedge Collection
Gorf's Acorn Adventure
Barbary Squirrels

Hugh Trevor

Hugh Trevor
Bryce Morrison
Sean Groat
Pauline Johnston
Hugh Trevor
Pauline Johnston
Bryce Morrison
Alan Brown
Sean Groat
Bryce Morrison

Next Issue

The next issue of CineChat is (tentatively) scheduled for January 2013, 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 December 2012

