

SYDNEY VIDEO MAKERS CLUB

ELECTRONIC EYE N E W S L E T T E R

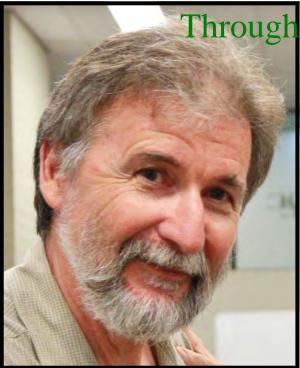
MARCH, 2012

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Next Meeting Wednesday 28th March, 2012

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www.sydneyvideomakers.org.au



Through The Presidents Lens

Welcome

What a way to kick the year off. James Nowiczewski was a real hit. I got plenty of positive feedback after the session. I have included a short article on his presentation in this month's EE. This month we follow on to "Audio Creative" with Dion Wilton explaining what to do with that audio now you have captured it. He will be going over sound design, audio mixing, setting the right levels, potential for noise reduction, audio problems that can be fixed in post, and how to polish up your audio so it sounds as good as possible. Dion has run sessions at the club previously so he will be familiar to many of you. I'm looking forward to this meeting.

Our next club competition is a natural follow on from these two sessions. This competition's focus is on better audio – either recording a musical performance or an interview, or even a combination. This will be a chance to practise getting the best possible sound, using our new audio gear and polishing up that audio in your edit suite.

There are quite a few members who have not paid their dues for this year. Our club 'runs on the smell of an oily rag' so guys, you know who you are, do the right thing and pay at the next club meeting. Just think if you went along to a external training session you would have to fork out a few hundred dollars to hear just one of our industry speakers, so the clubs fees are really good value.

Previous years VOTY screenings produced anomalies with some entries that were screened and their scores. All members should review the "Rules and Procedures for Competitions" available on the club website. Current rules state if an entry receives a place, first, second or third it is automatically screened. Note that any entry scoring 60 or more is eligible for screening at VOTY (5.4.4), if that entry wins say third place in a category where only three entries were received then it must be screened (5.4.5.1). Now an entry in another category may have scored more points than the low scoring third place getter but due to the number of entries in VOTY it cannot be screened. So it is conceivable that an entry that only received a score of 60 is screened instead of an entry that scored much higher in another category.

The solution to this is to introduce a threshold for awarding places. This would mean even if there is only one entry in a category if it does not exceed the chosen threshold no award will be made and it will not bump higher scoring entries off the screening list. This change will result in all those entries with the highest scores being screened at VOTY according to the true ranking of scores.

Phil Brighton and Ian Scott presented at our Mar Focus night. Phil explained how to source sound effects from the web and gave us an insight into Foley – including some tips on what can be used to mimic different sounds. Ian demonstrated how to set the correct audio levels on video clips using Sound Forge and Audacity software. He then brought a number of clips into his video editing software (Avid) and adjusted audio levels as he added each clip to the timeline. This was an excellent introduction to our next club meeting with Dion Wilton who will be taking this to the next level.

You will be pleased to know that your committee approved the purchase of a suitable heavy duty tripod and some counter weights for the video crane recently purchased. So we will end up with a complete crane kit. We will be demonstrating its use and other camera supports at the April Club meeting. I am the coordinator for borrowing equipment so let me know if you have a shoot planned and would like to use a club audio kit. Both kits are now out with teams so plan ahead and let me know what dates you need the gear otherwise others may be using it. First in best dressed but we will obviously try to accommodate everyone.

The club has been donated a Sennheiser MKE-300 shotgun microphone. This came from the family of a past president, Ted Northover who thought that the club could make more use of it. If anyone would like to try out an external shotgun mic on their camcorder to see what a difference it makes please feel free to borrow it. It attaches with a traditional hotshoe mount and plugs into a 3.5mm mini plug. This mic is a mono mic and you will be amazed what a difference it will make to your audio. (This mic is no longer available and the current version is MKE-400).

Teams - I have the role of team coordinator so please let me know your wishes. So far I have had a couple of responses and am coordinating with Team Leaders to try to satisfy all requests.

Our Social Event Organiser, Mike Elton is planning a night out at a local restaurant in Chatswood mid June.

We have allocated Club night catering till mid year by rotating through our teams, but ideally if one person would volunteer it make life so much easier. So have a think about it.

Remember our April club meeting has been moved as it falls on Anzac day, it is now Thu 26th of April.

Stay Focused Andy

Mar 2012

James Nowiczewski on Sound



James conducted the "Audio Technical" session at our February club meeting. He is an experienced sound recordist in the television and film industry and his presentation covered everything from audio on a basic camcorder to shotgun mics on boom poles with sound mixers. His approach was to start from a basic camcorder and then go through the basic steps on how audio can be progressively improved.

The notes he used were from a talk on the Canon 5D DSLR. These are pretty specific to that camera so will have limited appeal. The following is an edited version of his notes and his talk.

Headphones

Decent headphones are a must for recording decent audio – the comparison is trying to shoot good pictures with your eyes closed. Get in the habit of wearing them when shooting. You don't have to spend a fortune, but professional op-

tions include the Sennheiser HD25 and the Sony MDR-7506.

Camera mounted Shotgun Microphones

There are a few options, but essentially they all have a similar intention – a shotgun microphone has a fairly tight pickup pattern so what ever it is aimed at is the sound that will be recorded. The following shotgun mics all plug directly into a camcorder's external audio socket (3.5mm) and



result in an immediate and drastic improvement in recording quality: Rode VideoMic; Rode Stereo Video Mic; Que Audio Micro Shotgun; Sennheiser MKE 400. However contrary to some beliefs, a shotgun mic does not act like a 'zoom lens' for audio, and the effective distance for really good dialogue recording is about two metres – which is not a lot of scope. If you have a spare person

available you could mount the shotgun on a boom and get as close as possible to your talent as possible while staying out of shot.

Radio Microphones

Radio mics enable a discretely placed microphone to be placed on the talent, and free rein to be as far away as you like (within transmission range typically 100 meters). They are the 'one mans band' best friend, but they can also be tricky and are more susceptible to operator error than the simple shotgun microphone. Follow the manual carefully, and always wear headphones when using radio microphones. There are many options available in a massive range of prices, but a good features vs cost option is the Sennheiser EW112 G3. It comes with a microphone head which is not bad, but a big improvement is gained by using a third party mic such as the Sanken COS11 (approx \$400). James suggested using a small square of "fluffy" material and double sided tape, the small microphone can be attached to the inside of the talents clothing to prevent fabric noise when there is any movement. The radio mic transmitter and receiver must be set to the same frequency. If you experience interference with you will need to adjust the frequency, you will need to refer to the manual to do this if you are using the club's audio kit.

Boom Poles, Blimps and Fluffies

The optimum boom position is always above the talent. You should make sure the foam windshield is on the microphone even when it is in a blimp. To reduce wind noise use a blimp with a fluffy, this is more effective than any electrical circuitry that may be in the camera. James' recommendation is that the boom pole/shotgun/blimp(outside) is the best set up to capture good quality sound.

Audio Mixers

Why should I use a mixer? Because it results in better sound, the microphone amplification is far superior, it is much easier to adjust audio levels, it allows headphone monitoring, allows mic or line input. And most importantly it provides superior audio metering.

Setting Levels

James explained the different audio level settings.

- 1. "mic" is for microphones nominally –30db
- 2. "line" is for connections such as a live feed from a mixer there are two levels
 - · -10db
 - \cdot +4db

James recommended using the 'line' setting especially if using a longer cable from the mixer to the camera, providing your camera has that option. The 'line' setting bypasses the cameras



amplification circuit. When using radio mics operate them at the 'mic' level. Some mixers (including the club's Sound Devices PreMix-D) can generate a tone signal. This is a constant 1Khz tone at 0db from the mixer. This can be used to set the correct levels on your camera – James recommendation is a setting approx 2/3 along the meters scale. This will give you some headroom when recording so that you don't overrecord.

James was fairly critical of the recording on consumer video. His view was the person holding the camera would mask any rebasic microphones in camcorders and also of developments such as 5:1 surround cording of the rear channels. He also suggested switching off the AGC (Auto Gain Circuit) of your video camera if possible. This circuit will raise the noise floor as it hunts for sound during quieter passages.

When recording on location reduce any unwanted noise, turn off air conditioners, mobile phones, refrigerators, all those noisy items that may be picked up by your microphone. Also don't forget to record a minute or two of ambient noise (just the background sounds with everyone quiet on set) that can be used later in post production.

Don Reade videoed James' presentation and there are a number of DVD copies available in our Library. If you want a refresh on microphones and improving sound recording I recommend viewing James' session again.

Andy Doldissen



Sound design & mixing

presented by Dion Wilton BVA film & television



"One of the most invisible parts of a production and often overlooked when it comes to how an audience will receive your message. Cinematographers describe the addition of sound as supplying the heart of the picture, giving it weight and substance..." This presentation will show track lay up for a basic mix for drama (worked example). Also demonstrate the treatment of tracks (sound sweeting) with noise reduction and equalisation. We will show techniques such as presence matching & general mixing of sound dynamics. Time permitting we can discuss your sound mixing

problems too.

Dion has worked and studied in the media industry covering a wide range of roles and styles over a period of twenty seven years... These roles have included; direction, director of photography, camera operator, technical director, sound engineer, lighting designer, editor... The many styles of production have included drama, documentary, television commercials, training, corporate, music video and community tv.

Currently Dion works as a freelance operator and occasionally teaches at Metro Screen in Paddington, covering subjects from multi-cam production to chroma key...

"Make an informed choice of how you want your production to feel by choosing the sounds you want..."

BASIC CAMERA OPERATION MANUAL MODE.

- 1. During the months of March and April Club Presentations are concentrating on the audio aspects of video production. In order to have full control over all of the inputs to our camera we need to use at least some of the features only available when operating in Manual Mode.
- 2. There are two main aspects to consider when using a video recording camera.
 - 2.1. Adjusting, or setting up the various camera controls to correctly capture the images we want.
 - 2.2. Positioning the camera stabilizing it and composing the subject in the frame. In short creating the shot.

The latter of these two is undoubtedly the major creative aspect of camera work and will be the subject of presentations on the April Club night. During April Focus night we will deal with the more technical aspect, setting camera controls.

- 3. Regardless of the media and recording formats Camcorders come in four broad categories:
 - 3.1. Totally automatic

Point and shoot. Whilst useful and easy to use they do not require control settings to do their job. Creativity in the image relies on what the user frames up as a shot. Such cameras cannot fit into our focus night presentation on control settings.

3.2. Consumer Camcorders

Provide for auto and manual operation. Overall functionality of the camera makes them suitable for consumer use with the ability to be adjusted to varied conditions

3.3. Prosumer camcorders

Allow auto and manual operation associated with an overall wider range of resolution and operating function versus the "Consumer Level". Excellent results can be obtained with such cameras and they are often used by professionals for quick shoots, hence "Prosumer" name tag.

3.4. Professional Camcorders

Fully functioned in auto and manual. Camcorders with facility to directly interface to other professional devices such as XLR audio mics and controllers. Interchangeable lenses, etc. Capability and function is only limited by the cost outlay involved. These units look like very serious camera gear and are not the sort of thing one would take on a holiday unless you are an absolute camera fanatic and don't mind lugging the weight around.

- 4. In today's world there is also the DSLR. Being in fact a Digital SLR of the serious type which enables interchangeable lenses to be used. The video recording abilities available are steadily being added and improved. The main claim to fame by the ardent users of the DSLR, is indeed the lens interchange capability. In other respects the controls for exposure etc are driven by the same factors as our camcorders.
- 5. As previously stated the focus night presentation will concentrate on Basic Manual Operation, so the following is relevant;
 - 5.1. We cannot deal with fully automatic camcorders as there are no manual controls to set.
 - 5.2. Professional Camcorders are in a class well outside basic and will not be dealt with on the night.
 - 5.3. DSLRs are in a class of their own related to lens interchange which is in fact a creative aspect of handling not technical, so that we will not be diverted onto lens changing factors if there are DSLRs in the audience.
 - 5.4. The content will "Focus" on the basics of
 - 5.4.1. Setting up Manual operation mode
 - 5.4.2. Focus setting and relationship to lens apertures
 - 5.4.3. Exposure and colour balance setting
 - 5.4.4. External microphone connection and input level setting.

There will not be time to deal with other exotic features such as "face recognition" and in any case these are best dealt with and make more sense after one has a firm grip of the basic settings.

- 6. So if you want to brush up the basics of using your camcorder in Manual Mode bring it along to this focus night, as well as your camera manual. A hands on session is planned and we are organising some mentors to assist those who need a bit of help with the content and matching it to their camcorder. If you have an external video mic bring it along too.
- 7. See you on 11th April Focus night.



Ian Scott Secretary SVMC

Practical Direction;

presented by Dion Wilton BVA film & television



"Working with people in front of the camera has proven quite a challenge

for many productions. From the amateur actor to the professional, a

technical wall can appear to exist between them and the crew, stifling

creativity and slowing down production. I once asked a broadcast camera

engineer / designer, visiting from Japan, to squeeze in the features of a

large camera into a small one. He asked me why would you want to do

that? I replied that I no longer need to threaten actors with a large camera"

This presentation/course will introduce you to the basics of direction;

1. pre-production, exploring the scene with your "on screen" performers – referred to as working the scene & providing constructive feed back.

2. production, shooting efficiently on location with cast and crew, & how to vet new ideas tactfully as they arise.

3. post production, letting go of expectations and engaging different approaches offered by the editor (sometimes you)...

All three stages of production bring challenges in creating interesting communications with an audience and with these tools finding direction will become that little bit easier. Join me in exploring these techniques which will transfer across any level of production and shooting situation. I encourage those people with a project they struggled with, to share with us during the course to explore.

Dion's background:

Dion has worked and studied in the media industry covering a wide range of roles and styles over a period of twenty eight years... These roles have included; direction, director

of photography, camera operator, technical director, sound engineer, lighting designer, editor... The many styles of production have included drama, documentary, television commercials, training, corporate, music video and community tv.

He has trained a number of emerging directors on productions that has proven insightful in their development.

Currently Dion works as a freelance operator and occasionally teaches at Metro Screen in Paddington, covering subjects from multi-cam production to chroma key...

Full day course details...

Where: Kamaraigal Room at North Sydney Club 12 Abbott Street, Cameray

When: 30th of March 2012 – Friday 10:00 am till 5 pm Cost: \$100

catering at the club has satisfied previous course participants, given the choice of hot meals or coffee shop cuisine.

Camera Angles and Composition

Camera angles are used to convey more than the visual image to the viewer, they convey much more. Camera angles and movements combine to create a sequence of images, just as words, word order and punctuation combine to make the meaning of a sentence. One needs a straight forward set of key terms to describe them. I have tried to summarize these terms briefly below.

Framing or the Length of Shot

- **Extreme Long shot.** Generally used as scene setting or an establishing shot. Normally and Exterior shot outside of a building, it's meant to give a general impression rather than
- specific information.
- Long shot. Generally shows the image as approximately life size with head near the top of the frame and feet near the bottom
- **Medium shot.** Contains a figure from the knees/waist up and is normally used for dialogue scenes, or show some detail of action. Variations include the two shot or three shot
- containing two or three figures. Background detail is minimal. A variation of this is the OVER THE SHOULDER Shot which positions the camera behind one figure revealing the other figure and part of the first figure's back, head and shoulder.
- Close- Up. Shows very little background, and concentrates on either a face or specific
- detail. Everything else is just a blur in the background. Shows importance, usually an
- intimate shot. We feel comfortable or uncomfortable with the character.
- **Extreme Close-Up.** Generally magnifying beyond what the human eye would experience in reality, and can be used for dramatic effect

Camera Angles

The relationship between the camera and the object gives **emotional** information to an audience, and guides their judgement about the character or object in the shot. Examples are as follows:

- **The Birds-Eye View.** Shot from directly overhead, a very unnatural and strange angle. Puts audience in God-like position looking down on the action. People look insignificant.
- **High Angle.** Not so extreme and birds eye view. Camera is elevated above the action using a crane to give general overview. Makes object or character look less significant.
- **Eye Level.** A natural shot positioned as though it is a human actually observing a scene.
- Low Angle. This increases the height of the character and gives a sense of speeded up
- motion. Low angles help gives a sense of confusion to a viewer, of powerlessness within the action of the scene, can inspire fear and insecurity in the viewer.
- **Oblique/Canted angle**. Sometimes called the Dutch Tilt, the camera is tilted to suggest imbalance, transition and instability

Composition

Composition rules and conventions are older than cinema and photography. Film makers have borrowed many techniques from painters. These are some of the rules (sometimes they can be broken if you know what you are doing).

- Use the Rule of Thirds. Imagine the frame is divided into three both horizontally and
- vertically. The intersections of the lines are the points of interest where important objects are often placed. These points of interest are **comfortable** for the viewer.
- Looking Space. Allow empty space on the side where the subject is looking/facing/talking, this makes the viewing comfortable.
- Motion Space. Always allow empty space on the side where the subject is walking or
- running, this **allows or heightens** the feeling of motion.



Eddie Hanham

March Focus Night

March Focus Night we had the Dynamic Dou of Phil Brighton and Ian Scott exploring sound effects and Foley techniques. Phil ran us though some of the challenges of creating various sound effects. Phil also told us where to find that sound file you might be looking on *Audio Sparx* web site, which has more than 480,00 production music tracks and sound effects (http://www.audiosparx.com/).

Following Phil was Ian Scott with an enlightening session on sound editing in Avid. Scotty explained the basics of monitoring sound output levels and editing techniques. There was good roll up of members along with guest, Ilma Cave. Ilma wants to further her skills in making training videos. It is great to see so many lady members in our club and hopefully Ilma will soon join our Club.

Ian Howard had the presentation team running smoothly. There was keen interest from some members with Chris Kembessos and his new Sony NEX 7. Sony's new generation of mirror less DSLR camera has already won many awards, and no doubt will be a game changer.

Thanks to Claire Waterworth and Chris Kembessos for their photos.



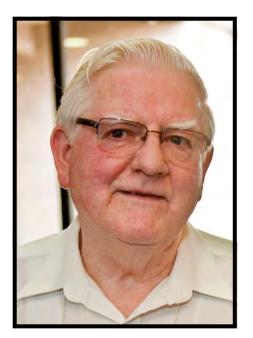
Neville Waller



Photos by Neville Waller

PERSONAL PROFILE.

SCOTTY.



Having been around for a few years there is as one might imagine a fairly big dirt file on my history. Hopefully some of it might be of interest to others without disclosing any of the real juicy bits.

As might be deduced from my accent I was born in Scotland. I came to Australia in 1950, one of the original boat people, sometimes disparagingly referred to as a 10 pound Pom. I did of course object to that reference. Scots are not Poms and furthermore being under 18 at the time I never had to pay the 10 pounds. I was as you might say Scotland's free gift to Australia.

Being a bright lad I was encouraged to become an electrician and managed to secure employment with the Brisbane City Council Electricity Department. That turned

out to be an excellent move. Along the way I was nominated to take on an Engineering Cadetship with the Council. This was a form of technology based slave labour, but at least at the end of it, a degree in Electrical Engineering and a real job.

Just to complicate matters in 1954 I received a nice letter from the government inviting me to undertake National Service Training, or go to jail. I opted for the NS training as the Queensland jails were terrible places at the time. This turned out to be another good move as my natural ability surged to the surface again and I was selected for Officer training. I took up that option as officers had nicer caps and not those slouch hat things. The Army are supposed to be good at using one's civilian skills when allocating you to a Corp, so I thought for sure I would end up in RAEME (the Engineering Corp) but with commensurate skill they allocated me to Royal Artillery. Years later I discovered that the selections were actually made on your proximity to a training depot, not for your convenience or even to make use of your talents, but to save the Govt. paying you any travelling money, nothing has changed! I was so disgruntled by this selection I remained in the Reserve for 30 years. I retired onto the reserve of officers in 1988 as a full Colonel. It really was a great paid hobby and I did learn a lot about man management, organization and how to train others.

As you can see I had plenty of time to spare so I got married and had three children just to fill in the gaps in my day. Around about 1961 I acquired an 8mm movie camera and took my first steps into the world of motion pictures. After being rejected by Hollywood, I continued to take family movies and abandoned thoughts of a career in the motion picture industry. Now anyone who has edited actual film with a splicer and film cement certainly understands the principles of cut and splice, but one soon finds it to be a chore. Like many others I progressed through to Video. Whilst the cut and splice was a bit easier it was still a bore. The bonus was learning the basics which enable you to make good use of the Non Linear Editor technology available today.

About the same time, actually in 1963 I joined a subsidiary of Exxon, called Gilbarco. I remained with Gilbarco for 30 years. Another good move as not only did they move me around Australia to end up in Sydney they sent me on frequent overseas trips. I reconnected with Video and on one of my many excursions through HK I bought a JVC handy cam using VHSC format. I have remained as an enthusiast of video since that time progressively acquiring newer technology toys along the way. I rose through the ranks at Gilbarco and became Engineering Director of Gilbarco Australia.

I retired from Gilbarco in 1983 and for awhile I made poker machines for Aristocrat. Unfortunately my first wife Joyce died from a brain tumour in 2000 after a two year illness. I decided to retire 100% to see Joyce through the illness. After that big loss I did some consulting for the Comm. Govt. National Standards Commission designing and supervising the building of a new Standards Laboratory at Londonderry. I was a National. Standards Commissioner for ten years over the period 1973 to 83, and acquired a unique skills set, just right for that Lab design job.

In 2002 I married Lorraine who now looks after me, she must be a Saint to put up with me, I am indeed grateful. I have travelled the world a fair bit and dependant of funds and health I am still interested in doing some more travel. An outcome from that passion is an interest in Travel Videos. I am now fully retired and we recently relocated into a very nice retirement village at Glenhaven. I no longer have to clean the leaves out of the pool, mow the lawns, fix the roof and maintain a large house with space and facilities we did not use. I am now able to pursue doing the things I like, such as woodworking and making Videos. I joined the club in 1998. I have been fortunate enough to match up with a number of other same mature age club members with about the same degree of mental damage. We share a liking for making videos, either as a team or separately. I certainly get a great deal of value and enjoyment out of my club membership.

Scotty

FINAL NOTICE

FEES FOR 2012

Fees have stayed the same as 2011 and are now due for 2012.

For those that have not paid you have until the 31st March. Please bring cash or cheque with you – persons that are not financial as of 31st March will no longer be eligible for the benefits of membership.

If you wish to post a Cheque please see below

Please address all correspondence for Committee Action to:

The Secretary,

Sydney Video Makers Club,

P.O. Box 1185,

CHATSWOOD NSW 2057

COMPETITION CORNER.

I would like to congratulate all entrants on their high standard of videos. It must have made the Judges job a lot harder.

This year the committee has put together a programme to help you with Audio, Camera, Angles, Manual setting etc. next Focus and Club Night should be very educational.

As we all know the Judges give of their free time to encourage you all to make better Videos. This I think they have achieved, as the standard has improved. After we are loosing one of our Judges

Regrettably due to some changed circumstances he wont be able to continue judging as much as he would wish to. He had requested that I thank the Members— "Thank you and all the members for giving me much pleasure and enjoyment in being able to see their work and to give my thoughts on it".

We would like to thank you for your time and effort over the last few years. We all hope that your health improves. Good luck.

On club night the Open Competition will be show and results given.

Please remember that the competition was changed for April.

The competition for April will close on 26th April. Title to be **Excellence in Audio**, either a **Interview or a Musical Rendition or both.** No more than 5 minutes.

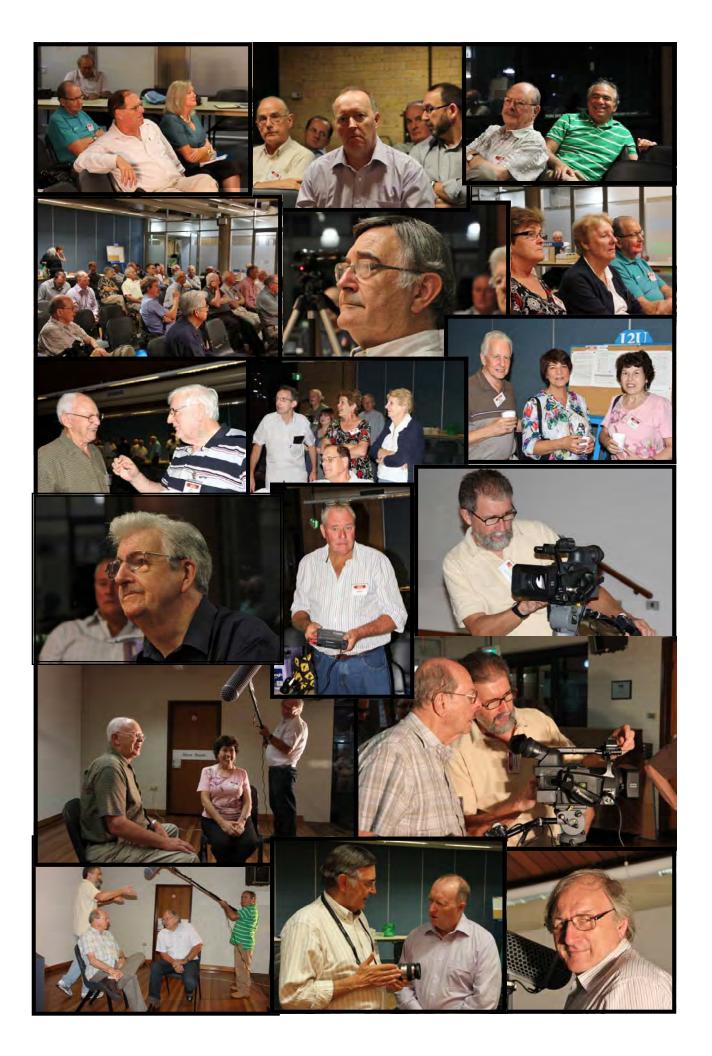
The third competition will close 27th June Drama and titled "Who done It".

The final competition is due on 22nd August and to be a 60 second Ad. titled "Roadside Service.



Margaret Tulloh Competition Man ager.





President:

Andy Doldissen

Vice President: Gerry Benjamin

Secretary:

Ian Scott

Treasurer:

David Rogers

The Club meets on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month (except for November & December) at 8PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood. Tea & Coffee are available from 7PM. FOCUS nights, which usually cover technical subjects, are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each month (except January & December) at 7.30PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood.

The Committee meets on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month. Members are always welcome to attend, and for meeting time and venue, see any committee member.

Member's guests may be invited to meetings; the first visit is free, subsequent visits are \$5. New members are always welcome. Annual membership is single \$56, self and spouse \$76, country member \$28 - with an initial joining fee of \$10.

Note: Equipment brought to a Club night is not covered by the Club's insurance. Members should study their household insurance and check whether their video equipment is covered away from their premises and consider whether their cover should be extended.

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Catering	To Be Decided	

Please address all correspondence for Committee Action to: The Secretary, Sydney Video Makers Club, P.O. Box 1185, CHATSWOOD NSW 2057