

March  
2016



## MEETING NIGHTS

First & Third Thursdays of the Month

## MEETING VENUE

Figtree Heights Public School, St George  
Avenue & Lewis Drive

Vehicle entrance off Lewis Drive

FIGTREE

## CONTACT DETAILS

[www.wollongongcameraclub.com](http://www.wollongongcameraclub.com)

[www.youtube.com/wollongongmm](http://www.youtube.com/wollongongmm)

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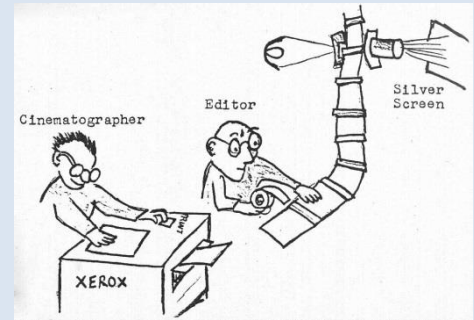
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# FROM THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW

by Ian Simpson  
& John Devenish



You would think being interested in making movies and for decades being bombarded by the commercial cinema, that we would have a clear idea of the importance of the various roles and skills required to produce a movie. That is why the results of the exercise that our Movie Makers Chairman Tom Hunt conducted at our first meeting this year is so interesting. Tom asked the members to list in order of the importance the various roles involved in making a club production. The surprising result was that the camera operator and the editor were rated more important than the director or the producer. A result that is contrary to the experience of the commercial cinema. Why is this so? Do members have a better understanding of operating a camera and editing footage than they do of directing or producing a club production? Or do they really believe that a club production only needs the actors to turn up, speak their lines whilst the camera rolls and the editor just has to join all these shots together in the correct order and add a bit of music?

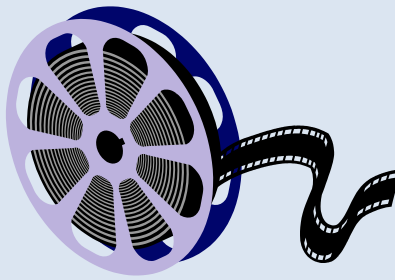
If we look at recent club productions, productions made to a script not documentaries, then the experience of those involved tells a different story. The producer has the challenging roles of not only overseeing how the script is to be enacted, but who will be the actors, who will bring along the equipment, where will be the location, what props will be needed and how to feed the hungry crew and talent. All of these roles also hinge on the producer being able to get everyone together on the same day at the right time. This is probably the most important role for both amateur and commercial productions.

The director's roles in number seem less challenging, but if not performed correctly, can let down the whole show. In our club productions, the director's roles are to prepare / supervise the storyboard, to direct the actors in how to deliver their lines and what expressions are required from them, to guide the actors in what is the "back story" to their character, to direct the camera person in the framing of shots to match the storyboard and to determine how the scene is lit and the sound is recorded.

By comparison the role of the camera person in our club productions is to know their equipment extremely well. So that if the director asks for a special manual setting of exposure or focus the camera operator can respond immediately. The camera operator follows the framing and composition indicated by the storyboard, but can always suggest to the director alternative set-ups which will enhance the production.

The editor's role is to ensure the visions of the director and scriptwriter are carefully translated into the moving image. Quite often in our club because of our small membership, productions roles are combined, and so quite often the roles of director and editor are combined. This combination can be of considerable benefit to the overall production as one person is providing continuity of creative purpose to the whole production.

The other roles of sound person, scriptwriter, storyboard creator, actors, lighting director, costumes and continuity persons are no less important. Always remember club productions are team productions. Every member of the team has to perform to the best of their ability for the final movie to be a success. Alternatively it is true that the weakest link can destroy the chain; a period production can be marred by the appearance of a digital watch; poorly recorded sound can turn a sound movie into a silent one; whilst the two most obvious to an audience if not performed correctly are poor acting from inadequate preparation or limited acting skills and an unbelievable or unexciting script.



## Last Month at the Club

21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

The first club meeting for the year got off to an energetic and innovative start with Chairman, Tom Hunt, leading the members present through a brain storming session. The challenge for all 11 present was to list all the team roles / skills that are required to make a club team production. Amongst the “usual suspects” nominated by members were a few “extras”. As there were more skills / persons than members of the club, Tom then asked the members to nominate what they regarded as the key functions / persons need to make up a club movie production team.

Interestingly from the table opposite, members regarded *Cameraman* and *Editor* as the key skills / persons required, closely followed by *Scriptwriter*. *Director* and *Sound recorder* were next and below *Actors* was *Producer*. This order of importance of skills, whilst clearly at odds with that of the professional cinema, where producer and director are kings, may say something about our amateur productions. Are we more comfortable operating a camera or editing than we are at producing or directing a club production? Or do we feel that once we have a script, a camera and a person to edit then the job is almost in the bag?

Tom then led the members in an innovative way of developing a story for the next Combined Clubs challenge. He asked each member to come up with a storyline that fits the theme, “Finally Finished.” He then divided the members up into pairs and asked each group to discuss their storylines. Then he split the groups and reformed them with different members and again each person in the group was to explain to the other what they thought was the best storyline. After a few permutations of this process, a stop was called by Tom and each member was asked to present what they thought was the best storyline to fit the theme. The following is a summary of these storylines:

1. Boy selling chocolates, man helps the boy, one of them runs off with money
2. Mother with 2 children, whilst she prepares dinner, one child plays with Lego the other practices the violin. All finish their activities together except one more Lego block that is found.
3. Pharaoh is building a pyramid – what will occur first? The completion of the pyramid or his death?
4. 1940 coal strike meant no steam trains were running. A Silver Comet diesel rail car was diverted from Broken Hill to transport punters to the Dapto dogs.
5. Paint job, nagging wife, constant distractions, golf fishing, pub. The painting is finally finished when mates come to help.
6. Retiree searches a long time for article. His son finally finds it, but too late for the father.

Importance	Skills
6	Producer
9	Director
1	Story writer
10	Script writer
7	Actor
6	Lighting director
2	Photographic Director
11	Cameraman
9	Sound recordist
1	Grip (holding microphone boom)
3	Clapperboard operator
	Gaffer
4	Quality and continuity manager
11	Editor
3	Story boarder
	Costume Director
2	Caterer
1	Floor Manager
	Scheduling Manager
	Actors Coach
	Musical director/musician

7. A man wants to complete a photo album. It takes him a long time to scan photos, prepare the book and get copies made for the members of his family. But when he presents the books to them he finds their questions will require him to do more; to make an audio recording to explain all the photos in the album.

From these seven possibilities, numbers 2 and 5 were chosen by the members to progress to the preparation of a script and storyboard.

Thanks Tom for a very stimulating beginning to the new movie making year.

## ***4<sup>th</sup> February 2016***

With 15 members in attendance and one visitor, chairman, Tom Hunt opened the meeting with a presentation on the theory of sound recording and then followed this up with some very clear demonstrations of the challenges faced in getting a clearly recorded sound.

### *Microphones*

Tom began by introducing the members to the various types of microphones, their uses and their limitations. Tom went on to discuss the challenges in sound recording which are always a balance between getting a strong signal of (say) the speaker you are recording and at the same time minimising all extraneous noises from the surrounding environment and electronic noise and distortion in your equipment. Tom discussed each of these problems in turn. Everything from planes flying overhead, to noisy dogs barking, to fridges in homes, to odd noises picked up when using long microphone cables. Another common cause of unwanted noise is how you set up your microphone. Interviewees often nervously play with microphone cords or tap desks, all of which adds unwanted sounds.



Tom Hunt showing members the club's radio lapel equipment

### *Getting the Sound Level Required*

Tom went on then to discuss how to set the record signal level. Many of our cameras have only automatic sound level recording which in some situations can amplify all sounds including unwanted background sounds. So if possible, Tom recommended that you manually set your record levels. But here Tom had a warning, you must be careful not to set the record level too high, otherwise “clipping” will occur. Tom explained clipping as where the tops of the normal sound wave gets cut as the digital recording system can no longer register these loud sounds. The result of this clipping can be some distortion or lack of clarity in the recorded sound. Then Tom went on to discuss what will happen if you set the record level too low. Now the words (say) of the person you are recording are of similar sound level to the background sounds. Thus if you later want to increase the volume to hear the speaker more clearly, unfortunately you will also increase all the background sounds. So how do you know when you have the recorded sound level correctly? Tom explained the various monitoring aids.



The oldest is the sound level meter which is normally calibrated in the dB scale where 0 is the level you do not want to exceed. Normally the scale beyond 0 dB is coloured red to warn you that this is the clipping territory. On many of our cameras we have a simple linear scale, one for each of the stereo channels, with a red “dash” or line at the right to warn when we have exceeded the recommended sound level. Tom then recommended that, as well as keeping an eye of your sound levels, you should also monitor your recording through headphones. The headphones concentrate your attention on what the microphone is actually picking up and so prevents any surprises during later editing.

### *Recording Practicalities*

Tom reminded everyone present that sound intensity falls off dramatically as you move away from the source of the sound. Here the message was clear, if you want strong, clear recordings, then get as close to your subject with your microphone as is physically possible. But even then you may have problems as Tom mentioned from “popping”. This is when the microphone is too close to a

person’s mouth such that their breath in pronouncing letters such “p” causes a popping sound to be recorded. The solution Tom advised was not to dramatically move the microphone further way but to use a covering on the microphone such as a “dead cat” or place a foam shield between their person and the microphone. Both approaches adsorb the pressure wave from your breath and stop the pop. Alternatively you could place the microphone at an angle to the speaker’s mouth.



A Dead Cat covering the mic attached to the top of the camera

### *Now to try out the theory*

Tom then arranged the placing of various microphones around the room and got Don Estall to read a document whilst walking. There was a fixed shotgun microphone, a boom microphone that followed the speaker, a fixed microphone facing the speaker and a lapel microphone attached to the speaker.



Don then proceeded to walk up and down the hall whilst all these microphones recorded his reading

of the document and other members made loud noises or shuffled papers or talked. Tom then collected all the recordings and the members then compared how each microphone captured Don's reading of the document.

A camera mounted shotgun microphone picked up Don's reading when he was close to the microphone but as he moved away the background sounds began to compete with Don.

The stationary microphone pointing at Don suffered from automatic sound level variation due to competition between Don and the changing background sounds.

The travelling boom microphone kept Don's voice at a constant level but there was still some competition from the varying background sounds.

The lapel microphone not only gave a clear and consistent sound level of Don's reading but it contained little of the varying background sounds. Only the very loud cries could be heard.

*So the winner is ..*

This very innovative experiment by Tom clearly demonstrated to the members what sound recording is all about. The simple message was get close and record manually.

The lapel microphone gave the best recording of Don followed by the moving boom microphone. The other microphones because they were further away or not directional enough picked up too much of the varying background sounds.

*Comments by Tom Hunt*

Our workshop showed how well the radio lapel mic works. The background noise was severe and circumstances with Don moving around made the situation the worst possible we might ever have to face. It tested the options to the extreme. Normal conditions are not nearly as tough.

Those members with a *Zoom* or other pocket sized recorders will be interested to know that for as little as \$30 you can buy a lapel microphone to connect to your recorder. Slip the *Zoom* into the pocket of the talent with a lapel mic attached to their collar and you will have the equivalent of the radio lapel system.

The limitations of the lapel microphone are, obviously, you can record only one per person talking in the scene. It can be difficult to hide them where you don't want them seen. The boom mike overcomes both these issues.

Ashley asked about aligning your sound recording with the video in your editing software. This is where a clapper board is really useful, but all you need is for the talent to clap their hands once in front of the camera. The clap puts a sharp spike on your sound waveform which you can visually align to the hands meeting in the video clip on your editing screen.

I don't think that Max's long lead will have any problems, it appears your mic is powered and probably has a pre-amp built in, and it does make life easier if you are recording directly onto your camera ( eg. no need for clap to align things later). A long lead can reduce the quality of the sound, but this is much less of a problem when the signal from the microphone has been amplified first.

After supper Tom introduced the members to the advantages of *Facebook* as a communication source for members. As Tom said, “We need still to consider the alternatives and decide which is best for us in the longer term. We could spend a whole meeting looking at this, and maybe we should schedule one. The overall club committee is looking at the issue also, with a special meeting planned for the new committee after the AGM. For now, feel free to try *Facebook* and/or the trial blog that John Devenish has set up and give us your thoughts.”

For anyone to have a look, the page is called "Movie Makers at Wollongong Camera Club". It appears you need to join *Facebook* to do so. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). You can do this in a minimal way and use it just for movie makers if you want to.

There are other social media options such as *Instagram*, *Linkedin*, etc. each with their own pros and cons. The committee is hopefully going to look at the options with a little help from an expert or two and should make a recommendation for us.

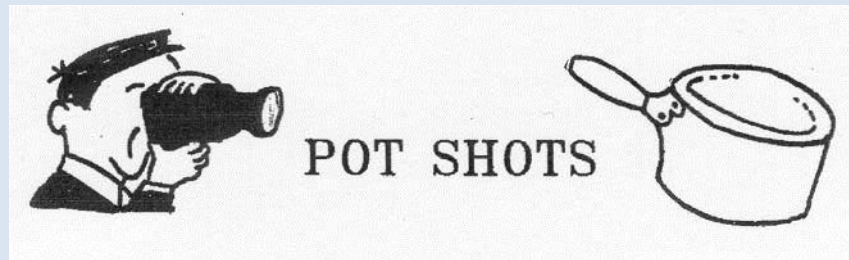
At the completion of his presentations Tom had a very special presentation. This was to Peter Brown for his audience appeal winning “Smooth Water” that was shown at the December club meeting.



The club’s next meeting is a studio, green screen, night when we can further experiment with our sound recording options. If you'd like to bring your sound gear along, you are welcome to be part of the sound team on the night.

This very innovative and informative evening was then capped off by a special viewing of Max Davies’ newest production, “Lake Wollumboola”. This 11 minute long video members noted held their interest so well that they didn’t notice its duration. Built on Max’s well developed proformer, we are introduced to the bird life of Lake Wollumboola through the eyes of a local expert.





### ***Ultra High Definition Video gets Better Defined***

The Ultra High Definition Alliance has defined what the premium home video experience should be. It is going to be better than the current UHD experience. Current 4K or UHD video is limited to 8-bit colour coded files, only 256 colour grading. The new “Ultra HD Premium” standard calls for 10-bit 4K recording or 4 times more colour grading. The new specifications have been developed by leading film studios, consumer electronics manufacturers, content distributors and technology companies. All this means we should see on our UHD TV screens improvements in resolution, brightness, contrast and colour graduation and even the sound area has not been neglected. So keep an eye out for the Ultra HD Premium logo.



### ***Upgrade to Windows 10 – Yes or No?***

Have you been bombarded by a popup that asks you to download for free your *Windows 10* upgrade? Have you been tempted, after all it's free? Be warned, one of our members tried the upgrade and soon found problems running his older software. A quick search of the *Pinnacle* Users forum, for example, showed similar experiences with Windows 10, with comments such as: “*Pinnacle Studio 9, 9 Plus, 10 and 11 are not compatible with Windows 10, whilst Pinnacle Studio 12U (with patch), 14U and 15U are compatible with Windows 10 including Scorefitter*”. *Pinnacle Studio* is up to version 19 now, so perhaps you would regard holding older versions as unnecessary, but often, with nonlinear editing software, the earlier versions are simpler to use and quicker for some rough editing jobs as they are not encumbered with all the often unnecessary add-ons present in the current software versions.

### ***We are just getting used to 4K, and now there is 8K!***

*Panasonic* has decided to resume image sensor development so as to speed up the change to 8K(?) They want to produce 8K sensors for their consumer and broadcast cameras, with models expected on the shelves in 2018. With 8k video each still image has a size of 7680 x 4320 pixels or in other words 33MP. Now that is a lot of detail in one image never mind the storage capacity required for 25 fps video. Let us hope that storage devices get bigger and cheaper by 2018, as well we hope that computer developments can keep up with this avalanche of data.

### ***Videomaker's Best Products of 2015***

The well-known magazine and website, *Videomaker* recently listed its best products in 2015. For their selection they used the criteria of products that “encourage democratization and inclusiveness in the media industry” and that “best help the largest share of our community”. Two Aussie firms starred; Best Tripod went to *Miller Air* and the Best Microphone went to *RodeLink Filmmaker Systems*.



# 2016 Programme

Date	Meeting Agenda	Place	Responsible Member
March 3	<i>"Finally Finished" studio night</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>I Simpson &amp; J Devenish</i>
March 8	AGM	School Hall	All
March 17	<i>Camerawork and Storytelling in Holiday videos</i> <i>One Minute Videos</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Ian Simpson</i> <i>Max Davies</i>
April 4 - 8	FAMM National Convention – The Sebel, Kirkton Park	Hunter Valley	All
April 7	<i>No regular meeting due to the FAMM convention</i>		
April 21	<i>Team Video Projects – Create a video biography / personal portrait</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
May 5	<i>Issues with copyright</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Chris Dunn</i>
May 14	<i>Combined Clubs Meeting – show our "Finally Finished" video</i>	Nowra	All
May 19	<i>Making an Animated Video</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Jim Pyle</i>
June 2	<i>Midyear Competition – entries up to 7 minutes in duration</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>All</i>
June 16	<i>Editing Workflow</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>John Devenish &amp; Tom Hunt</i>
July 7	<i>Editing Workshops in members' homes</i>		<i>All</i>
July 21	<i>Theme Night – "Unreasonable Expectations" – bring along a video that fits this theme</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
August 4	<i>New ways of capturing video</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>I Simpson &amp; T Hunt</i>
August 18	<i>Voiceover Workshop</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
September 1	<i>One Minute Videos</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>M Davies</i>
September 10	<i>Spring Outing to Australian Botanic Gardens</i>	<i>Narellan</i>	<i>All</i>
October 6	<i>Making a Commercial – form teams and take on making a 30 second advertisement.</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>All</i>
October 20	<i>Viewing and evaluating Commercials the teams have produced.</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>All</i>
November 3	<i>Green Screen Workshop.</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>John Devenish</i>
November 17	<i>What can we learn from the Big Screen – Learn from Oscar winning experts</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
December 1	<i>Gala Night –Screening of VOTY Entries.</i>	<i>School Hall</i>	<i>All</i>
December 13	<i>Annual Dinner</i>		<i>All</i>

Colour Code: Normal Monthly Meeting Extra Monthly Meeting Special Meeting