

# Cine Chat

September 2009

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



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

## **About ECVS**

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



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

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

### **CLUBROOMS**

23A Fettes Row, Edinburgh, EH3 6RH

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

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Scottish Charity No. SC009670

### **EDITOR:**

Alan Brown

23A Fettes Row, Edinburgh EH3 6RH

Email: [xxxx@xxxx.co.uk](mailto:xxxx@xxxx.co.uk)

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

### **POLICY COMMITMENT:**

To publish informative and entertaining articles, features, news, comments and opinion about movie making in general and ECVS and it's members in particular. Never to cause intentional offence, but not to be afraid of 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 2009 - 2010**

<b>President:</b>	Sean Groat
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Peter Dick
<b>Past President:</b>	Bob Bell
<b>Secretary:</b>	Hugh Trevor
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Vic Young
<b>Subscriptions:</b>	Alan Brown



## Editors Column

Welcome to the September 2009 issue of CineChat! I'm pleased to say we have another bumper issue this month, thanks to all those who contributed articles!

There's a bit of a wide-screen feel to this issue, with an interesting discussion of 16:9 vs 4:3 from Jim Closs, and a bit of the history surrounding differing aspect ratios from Peter Dick. We also have an introduction to our new President, Sean Groat, and a guide to this years ECVS Committee. Ann Sutherland has also given us a report of some recent club film-making during the Edinburgh Festival, so we've hopefully got something of interest for everyone. I hope you have all had a great summer, and are looking forward to the new session commencing Thursday 1st October with President's Night! See you there!

## My Life in Film

An introduction by Sean Groat

I thought I would start by introducing myself and telling you a 'potted' history of me and my film-making.

I was born and brought up in Orkney in the 70's. My parents were beef farmers on the island of Sanday (about 16 miles long by 5 miles at the widest - population at the time about 550). As was popular at the time my father owned a cine camera and despite reports of the noise of the



*Outgoing President Bob Bell hands the chain of office to this years ECVS President, Sean Groat.*

clockwork motor scaring me it was certainly used often and the images captured don't show an unhappy young Sean.

When I was about 4 or 5 I had my first shot with the camera and early footage still survives of a very short shot of my mum (and mainly the sky) that I took. I remember when visitors came, especially friends or family from outside the island as my brother and I would pester Dad to have a 'film show'. Many times he would give in and there was an air of excitement as the screen was set up. In those days he used standard 8 without sound so I usually gave a running commentary, and I knew it off by heart.

Times changed and I guess Dad became too busy to film often and probably the price and availability of film became unattractive. I began to take still photos and moved through a number of cameras as I progressed up the range, buying a Russian Zenith 11 when I was about 16 or 17.

In the 80's we had some archaeologists from Bradford 'digging' in one of our fields and one summer I resurrected the 'movie camera' from the back of the sideboard and managed

to buy some film and shot one 50 foot roll. It was a successful attempt so the following Christmas I bought another roll and shot that too. Sadly, though, that was the last of my cine attempts.



At the age of 14 I left Sanday, and went into Kirkwall to live in the School Hostel, getting home one weekend a month and School holidays.

I remember having a video camera at the

Grammar School and even managed to talk them into me borrowing it one weekend and taking back to the Hostel. We had great fun filming each other being silly, as kids do, and sadly the staff got wind of it and confiscated the tape - a real shame as I am sure it would be a big hit on You-Tube these days! This weekend must have stirred something in me as I wrote my first script afterwards (a film that has never been made). I remember the camera being huge - something akin to what I guess STV must have used with a vcr slung over the shoulder.



I was mainly a stills photographer though, and developed my interests in that area for many years before returning to video.

After leaving school at 17 and after a year working in a local Hotel I started work with the local chemists, working in their photo lab and then was moved to their new shop

selling cameras and video cameras. At that time video cameras were coming down in size and were finally selling just below the £1000 mark. I used to 'test' the cameras out and learn how to use them and their functions and again borrowed one from time to time and took it home to video friends and family. In June 1995 I packed up my flat, my life and belongings and I left Orkney to go to sea onboard the MV Royal Princess, a cruise liner for Princess Cruises. I had my camera and a video camera with me as I set off on an adventure which over the next two years saw me at sea for 12 months and visiting 44 countries round the globe, many more than once. It was great fun and also hard work but a good way to see the world and meet its people. I have hundreds of photos and many hours of video on 8mm which I captured onto the PC and burned to DVD but by todays standard the quality is so poor that they sit on the shelf gathering dust.

On my return to land I decided to come to Edinburgh and look for work. I started in Dixons at the Gyle and for about 4 years I moved round the Dixons in Edinburgh, slowly progressing up the ladder. With my



background knowledge I was put into the photographic section and looked after the video cameras and still cameras, as well as the new digital cameras that were emerging. I remember there being a competition where the stores were asked to make a short film. I was in the St James store at the time and we made a very bad little film involving Pokemon toys. The following year for the competition we made a spoof News broadcast called "Selling for Profit News" - it didn't win.

In time I needed a change so I went to work at Jessops and again over three or four years I moved round the stores in Edinburgh and Livingston, again working my way up the ladder to Assistant Manager at Fort Kinnaird. It was there that I first heard of ECVS and after much persuading I came along to a meeting. That first winter I came to many of the meetings as a guest and found the club to be a friendly, welcoming place with a good sense of friendly rivalry and banter. The next



season I joined up officially and had good success with the film of my brother out on his creel boat “Partans in his Creel” that I had made over the summer. I had already had one attempt at a film, the year before, and had shot a tourist information type film about Orkney called “A Trip to Orkney” which I have never entered into competition but I have finally shown to the club.

The 2009/2010 season will be my fifth season

with the club and my first as President. I still consider myself a ‘new boy’ at ECVS but I know that there is such a strong team spirit that I am in safe hands and won’t be allowed to make too many stupid mistakes. I hope to keep the club strong and have a sense of fun at the same time. Declining membership numbers are a worry to me and something I will be trying to work on.

We have some good ideas for the programme for next season and the committee will be working hard over the summer recess to bring it all together ready for the nights drawing in in October.

I work as a civil servant with the Scottish Courts these days and as such go out on circuit round the country and I am always looking out for other film making clubs, looking for ideas and speakers as well as groups to swap show reels with. I joined S.A.M. a couple of years ago, too and was asked to be their secretary which I have done for the last year. I am getting a real buzz out of being in the two clubs and enjoy getting out and about and meeting people. I have two or three short film projects lined up for the summer and many, many more ideas still waiting in the wings.

I hope everyone had a good summer and managed to get out and about and do some filming and hopefully we’ll see the results in the forthcoming session.

## For Sale Canon XM2

All sensible offers considered!

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07870XXXXXX(preferably by text)

or email at:  
xxxxxxxxxxx@blueyonder.co.uk



## FRED McKAY

ECVS members were sorry to learn about the death in July of our former committee member and tea convenor, Fred McKay.

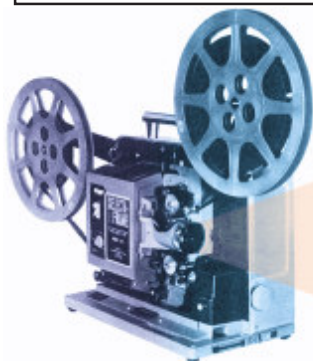
Being in the kitchen when Fred, often ably helped out by his wife Nan, was making the tea, was to be well entertained with jokes, and informed about the ins-and-outs of the latest videoing equipment on the market as he shared his latest discoveries and experiences. Fred also enjoyed joining members in filming events.

We send our condolences to Nan.



## ‘Don’t shoot the projectionist!

*By Peter Dick*



That seemed to be the reaction of the audience on some Thursday evenings. The Thursday projectionist is expected to work at a moments notice with media they have never seen before. Tapes and discs are all different, some start the feature immediately while others need to be cued. Are they to be screened as normal or widescreen? Getting this to work first time every time is expected but this did not always happen. The screen would light with unhelpful messages from the machinery telling the projectionist that it was not

going to work. If the audience was feeling stressed then what about the projectionist!

The committee decided to address this problem area and set up a project running through the summer to resolve the screening issues. A working group met on Thursdays evenings and it proceeded to examine the system and was able to rectify many of the issues causing problems. At the same time maintenance and improvements were carried out. The projectionist will now have a working preview monitor avoiding using the main screen. The projector can be switched between normal and widescreen at a single push of a button. The sound system now has working surround sound and the quality has been significantly improved. Loose unsightly wiring has now been secured in trunking and the screen curtains are now clean.

Now the projectionists will have a less hostile environment to work in. Results will be much better but the odd hitch will still likely to happen, so remember don’t shoot the projectionist!

# FESTIVAL CAVALCADE

*A Report by Ann Sutherland*

Imagine the problems filming this year's Festival Cavalcade could have posed ECVS if the organisers hadn't decided to re-route it, from the tramway assault course that the traditional Princes' Street route has become, to the "closed-to-traffic-on-Sunday-anyway", green valley and arena of The Queen's Drive and Holyrood Park.



The new venue may have reduced spectator numbers, but for ECVS film-makers it made it easier to find locations from which to capture, with a clear view above the crowd, colourful and active pictures to complement each other's footage in the final edit which Alan Taylor will be producing. Jim is also editing a version.

From our midway vantage point on the grassy bank beside the road and the procession, Jim and I aimed for close up shots of the performers and material for cutaways.

Their Press passes allowed Bob and Alan the opportunity to shoot along the length of the parade, getting right in amongst the friendly, carnival atmosphere of the cavalcade with its motor bikes and horses, entire Tattoo cast, wide range of international Fringe performers, local groups and decorated floats.

Both Alan and Bob were shooting High Definition 16:9 as was Peter who had a panoramic

view from his vantage point overlooking Holyrood Parliament and Palace, enabling him to take long shots and many successful tracking shots. At the last moment Peter had decided to take a Minidisc recorder and a small directional microphone. At the site, he'd set the left sound channel 6dB lower than the right as a precaution against overloading. The Minidisc was set up with the microphone pointing towards the performers' route. However, the elevated site picked up the sound the bands mixed together, which, he feels, makes his sound track of limited value.

Some of the equipment used in filming was: **Panasonic HVX 200A DVC PRO HDP2**

using mini DV format at 720x576 with monopod;

**Panasonic NV DX110** mini DV - small, light, stable, manoevrability;

**Canon H1.** Vinten Vision 3 tripod. Shot in HDV with the output down converted to DV. Zoom lens near 600 focal length, polarising filter;

**Canon XL1** - Fairly big and heavy, shoulder mounted, good for steady shots at live events even when zoomed in a long way .

A collaborative project such as this allows members to learn more about the best ways to use the filming equipment they have, develop their filming skills, compare results and learn. Making a Festival Cavalcade film grew informally out of a project Alan originally had been going to film with his college colleagues. There is always a lot going on in Edinburgh, and getting together to film and edit such an event can be satisfying and profitable, whether its aim is to create an archive record, learn more about live event filming, provide entertainment by "sharing " the event with those who couldn't be there, or just having a fun day out. It is to be recommended.

# Pity the Poor Beginner

*By Jim Closs*

In 1996 I took my first steps into the hobby of video film making and, like all beginners, my first decision was what kind of camera to get. In those days the choice was basically Hi-8 or S-VHS. I opted for a Panasonic S-VHS-C compact camera with which I filmed for several years. From that point on things were fairly simple. My SVHS source tapes were captured to a Casablanca and the finished project was copied out to an SVHS 'Master' tape from which standard VHS copies were made for showing. There were cables to be used for connecting camera to VCR or TV and that involved learning about RCA Phono connections, composite video, or S-Video - and, of course, the dreaded SCART. But it didn't take long to get the hang of it. Recently I bought a Canon HV30 camera so that I could start learning about the world of High Definition video and this made me realise what a minefield the technology of our hobby has become in the last few years, and how it must seem very confusing to the beginner of today.



The first decision is still what kind of camera to get. Today that means Standard Definition (SD) or High Definition (HD). I know that many will say that High Definition is the obvious choice as that is where the future lies. But SD cameras are about half the price of HD alternatives or even less. When you also consider that computers and software that will handle HD video are still not plentiful, and that hardly anyone has equipment for projecting a finished HD project, there is a lot to be said for doing your learning on a nice cheap SD camera. Unless, of course, you want to film in 16:9. The SD camera I am replacing says it is 'true' 16:9 and the LCD viewfinder has the right dimensions. But I learned recently that some SD cameras have 4:3 chips and do 16:9 by 'letterboxing' the chip - ie only using the centre strip of the chip and then expanding the letterboxed image to make it seem like true 16:9. If you film in 4:3 with these cameras you get good quality video - but the quality drops off noticeably in 16:9. So there's another little problem.

But suppose you do decide to grasp the nettle and go for High Definition, you are then faced with the next set of choices - Tape, DVD, Hard Disk Drive (HDD), or Memory Stick. Each has its pros and cons. My research led me to dismiss DVD and HDD as rather



impractical dead ends. My preference would have been to go for Memory Stick video storage but then I encountered the next hurdle - HDV or AVCHD? For those who haven't dipped into this area yet, HDV is a high definition standard designed for storage on MiniDV tape while AVCHD is designed for computer-based storage devices such as HDD or Memory Stick. A technology that has no moving parts to go wrong seemed very attractive to me so my inclination would have been to go for AVCHD and the memory stick. Then came the next 'but'. My computer is just over a year old, as is my editing software - Adobe Premiere Pro CS3. But Premiere Pro CS3 won't handle AVCHD, only HDV. So I would also have to shell out a couple of hundred pounds for a software upgrade. And it would apparently be advisable to have a new computer while you are at it!



*Canon HV30*

Hence, I opted for the HDV route and I have to confess that the Canon HV30 is an impressive bit of kit which provides really high quality video images - when you can view them. And that is where the next problem cropped up. The camera is equipped with a range of connectors including the good old AV-out Phono - audio red and white, and video composite (yellow). It also has the new 'component' - red, green and blue. Then there is an HDV/DV (Firewire) connection, a USB port (naturally, you will say), and an HDMI

port. So you can view your footage in high definition - as long as you can work out which cable and port to use. I used the Firewire connection to capture my first HD clips and can play them back on my computer monitor. I could also play them back on the 19" flat screen 'HD Ready' TV that I use as a video monitor but my computer doesn't have any ports that will connect with it. Does that mean another upgrade?

Since I'm now filming in HDV my Premiere Pro software can handle the editing and when I've finished the project I can write out a high definition 'Master' back to MiniDV tape using the camera as a recording device. But when I want to run off copies from the master for showing, what do I do? Output them to a DVD, you may say. But DVD doesn't support high definition. The DVD and Blu Ray formats

went into a head-to-head battle and Blu Ray won. If I want to have high definition copies for showing I will have to throw away the one year old DVD writer from my computer and install a Blu Ray writer instead. Then I will have to replace the two DVD players I have; one for my editing

studio and the other for the sitting room where we tend to watch these things. And if I offer a film for a competition I wonder if the organisers will have a Blu Ray player to show off my wonderful HD project as it should be seen.

Are you confused?

I confess I have been at several stages of my learning curve to date. And I now have thirteen years experience of this hobby behind me.

So - I do pity the poor beginner!

# Meet the Committee 2009/2010



**Sean Groat**  
**President**

Sean has been an active member of ECVS for several years and has produced a number of excellent, award-winning films. Sean is also always keen to get involved in club film-making projects, and as this year's President, hopes to make it an exciting and productive year!



**Peter Dick**  
**Vice President**

Having joined the ECVS committee last year, this year Peter has been elected our Vice-President. As well as being actively involved in the running of the club, Peter is also a prolific winner of awards this year winning the Budgie Cup Trophy.



**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 underwater filming techniques and is also involved in various club films and projects.



**Hugh Trevor**  
**Secretary**

Hugh has been a member of ECVS for about 8 years, and has been secretary for about 6 years. The videos Hugh enjoys making are travel films and documentaries. Hugh has produced many interesting travel documentaries from a wide range of locations and has won a number of awards for his excellent films.



**Alan Brown**  
**Membership Secretary**

Alan has been a member of ECVS for the past 7 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!



**Bob Bell**  
**Past President**

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.

# Meet the Committee 2009/2010



**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!



**Jim Closs**  
**Committee Member**

Jim returns to the committee after a few years absence. He 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.



**Stewart Emm**  
**Committee Member**

Stewart has been a member of ECVS for several years. Stewart does a lot of work publicising the club and encouraging potential new members to join.



**Charles Reid**  
**Committee Member**

Charles has been a member of ECVS for many years, and is a regular attendee of our Friday night programme. We welcome him onto this years committee.



**Alan Taylor**  
**Committee Member**

Alan is the publicity officer for this year's session. He always working on a project and open to collaboration. His interests include filming local events, shorts, weddings and corporate videos in addition to online distribution and gaining work experience in the industry of film and television.



**Alasdair Bryson**  
**Committee Member**

Alasdair has been a member of ECVS for several years. We welcome him onto the committee this year for the first time.

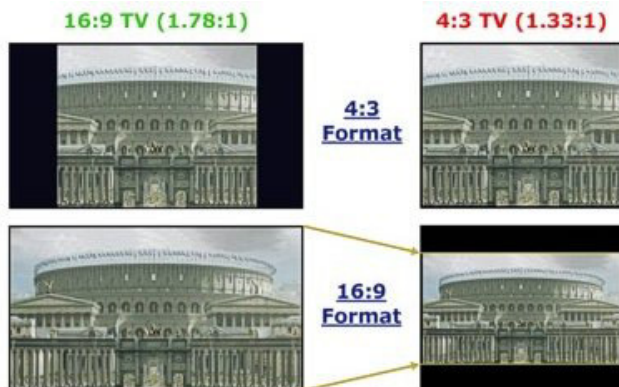


**Frank Ramsay**  
**Committee Member**

Frank has been making films for many years, his main interest is in documentary style productions, which he finds very satisfying to produce.

# An Introduction to Aspect Ratio in Television

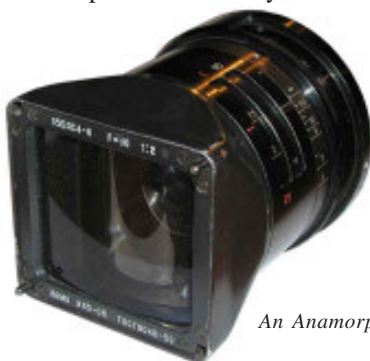
By Peter Dick



Aspect ratios seem to cause a lot of worry. There is no need for such worry as it is very simple. The aspect ratio of a DISPLAY is simply the ratio of the lengths of the horizontal axis and the vertical. It is the actual display that counts. In television terms two aspect ratios are current 4:3 and 16:9 which is rapidly replacing it.

requiring new cameras and projectors. Cropping the film image would lead to an unacceptable loss of quality leaving the anamorphic lens the only economic option.

When introduced electronic television adopted its aspect ratio from the world of film where 35mm film was the established standard. The pre war (1939-45) aspect ratio was 5:4 but changed to 4:3 in the post war years. Television displays were round cathode ray tubes with a mask with rounded corners defining the aspect ratio behind a safety glass. This meant that films images would closely match that of televisions and could be transmitted. Over the decades of television, old films and some not so old films filled the schedules. The film studios saw television as a rival which eroded cinema audiences. To compete with this challenge the studios decided to make cinema more interesting and embarked on many ways of achieving this. One, of which, was to widen the screen. The aspect ratio of film stock was fixed and to change this would involve great expense



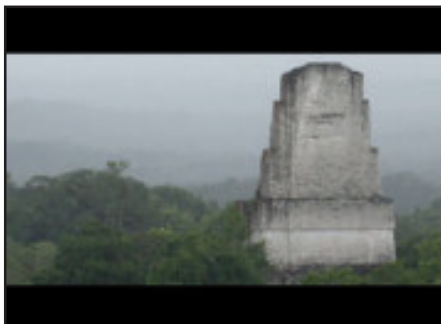
*An Anamorphic lens*

These anamorphic lenses distort the image in a controlled fashion. On the camera it compresses the image in the horizontal plane leaving the vertical plane untouched. A wider image can now be recorded onto standard film stock. If the final print was then projected the image would still be approximately 4:3. Actors would be tall and thin and the image would be obviously wrong. A matching lens that optically reverses the action of the camera's anamorphic lens is fitted to the projector. From camera to screen two extra lenses were required to give a widescreen presentation. This was the most common way of pro

ducing a wide screen. It also introduces the term anamorphic being used to describe the process using controlled distortion.

I hope the historical explanation removes the concern over the term anamorphic. Video cameras can also produce anamorphic recordings. All 4:3 cameras can record a 16:9 image by using an anamorphic lens. However, this may not be cost effective. Some models can unaided produce both 4:3 and 16:9 recordings. Only cameras with a true 16:9 image sensor(s) will produce the best results. Unlike the mechanics of film cameras it is cheaper to produce new products that replace the 4:3 image sensor system by a 16:9 one. Most cameras sold these days have 16:9 image sensors. All consumer tape based 16:9 camcorders record their images in an anamorphic form. The market place is ensuring that all new displays being sold are 16:9.

There is another aspect ratio that is being presented to viewers during the transition period from 4:3 to 16:9. That is 14:9 it can be seen on many analogue broadcasts as mattes above and below the image giving a slight letter box effect. This interim ratio is expected to be discontinued when analogue services cease.



The observant reader may have noticed that I have not mentioned pixels at any time. This is a subject in its own right but I am glad to say they are unimportant in understanding

the aspect ratio. However, a note of caution, if one strays away from the defining display aspect ratio in units of length and try to use pixels instead trouble is likely to follow. The reason is that the standard definition television pixels themselves are not standardised and do not have fixed aspect ratios. Their ratio is determined by the television standard in use.



If one wants to use a computer to generate graphics for television use then be aware that computers normally work with square pixels. Using a computer graphics program to produce a television image requires the user to be mindful of the correct pixel ratios for the standard that they are working with. It will depend on the software one is using, luckily some graphics programs have facilities to cope with material destined for television, also some video editing software is able to accept and correct mismatched graphics.

It is the final display that counts, to correctly achieve it requires care in the production process, but it is not difficult. The future will be much simpler, high definition television systems use the same aspect ratio from camera to screen. Graphics and editing also benefit as the pixels are all square in common with the computer.

# Spectacular Jousting - at Linlithgow Palace

*Jim Closs*

A “What’s On?” trawl through the internet led me to this event which was organised by Historic Scotland for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July. The idea of knights jousting on the field seemed like a good opportunity for filming an event that promised to be both colourful and action packed so I contacted the organisers to see how they would respond to the idea of a bunch of amateurs coming along to film it. Fortunately they were quite positive about the idea so I sent out an email to all the club members for whom I have addresses, to see who was interested and available. Being July, of course, a lot of folk were on holiday so I widened the net to see if any SAM members would like to join in - but most of them were away as well. Just when it looked as if I was going to be the only person around to do the filming I got some replies so we managed to muster a crew of four cameras - Alasdair Bryson, Hugh Trevor and myself from ECVS and Bob Bachelor from Perth Camcorder Club.

Knowing I now had a camera crew I got back to Historic Scotland and arranged to meet at Linlithgow Palace on the day before the event to see the setup and work out what was possible in the way of camera positions. This was very encouraging. The jousting was to take place on a field just below the palace and close to the loch. The fenced off area for the jousting had a ‘rail’ down the middle along which knights would charge, one on each side. At each corner were two tents where the performers stored some of the gear they needed during the performance and at the side nearest the loch was a ‘Royal Box’ from which the commentator would operate during the



performance. The organisers were naturally concerned that we should not block off the views of the paying public so positioning a camera at each of the corners beside the tents suited us since the tents already obscured some views. They also allowed us a position beside the ‘royal box’. Once the commentator went in there he did not come out till after the performance so we were unlikely to disturb anything important. I took up the fourth position as a kind of narrow range ‘roving’ camera which allowed me a view along the rail where the knights would charge each other.

The whole setup now looked very promising and the only nagging thought at the back of my mind was what the weather might do to us. ECVS members who were there will remember the 2004 re-enactment of the battle of Bannockburn where the rain came in horizontally in sheets for two days and almost completely wiped out all attempts at filming. Fortunately, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July dawned to a brilliant blue sky and sunshine which lasted the whole day through - so we had excellent weather conditions for filming. We got in place early - about 11am - and started filming location shots, arriving crowds, and clips that would make useful

cutaways. In the morning there were two supporting events which we also filmed. First was a display by Musketeers and Archers and the second - called "Kids Recruitment" was aimed - as you might guess - at involving children from the audience into a version of the "Little People's Army" which played a significant role in winning at Bannockburn. If you don't know about the "Little People's Army" come and see the film when we show it at Fettes Row! (or just do a search on the internet)



At 1:30pm the jousting started and I think all of us in the camera crew found that it was non-stop action to which we could only react with some guesswork as we simply didn't know what was going to happen - or happen next. The jousters, who went by the name of "The Knights of Royal England", put on a very professional performance working to a story line which they knew but we didn't - so we found ourselves swinging cameras after whatever bit of action seemed to be the focus of audience attention at the time - then swinging back to wherever the action seemed to have shifted - always hoping to have focused on the appropriate piece of action. I think we got most of it right between us but only thanks to the fact that we had four cameras covering the

angles. Although the location and weather were great for filming the non-stop action and not knowing how it was going to change from minute to minute made this a very challenging project to film and I would like to express my thanks to Alasdair, Bob and Hugh for how well they rose to the challenge.

The jousting was repeated later in the afternoon and we filmed that as well to be sure we had covered everything. At 4pm we stopped, having filmed almost constantly for five hours - apart from brief comfort stops. So a tired camera crew headed for the nearest café for a quick coffee before catching the train back to Edinburgh. With over 10 hours footage between us, I had the task of editing this down to something manageable. I found the edit a testing process, having to search among the footage from four cameras for the 'best' clip for each part of the storyline but eventually the job was finished and a DVD sent to Historic Scotland from whom we are waiting to hear as this article goes to press. It was an enjoyable project and I hope that Cine Chat readers will have a chance to see the finished product at a suitable point in the coming year's programme.





*By Jim Closs*

Recently I have come across discussions of the merits of screen formats (4:3 vs 16:9) and find people being encouraged to put their films into 16:9 because it makes them look more 'Modern'. I don't quite know what to make of this advice as I'm not sure what 'modern' is supposed to look like - in terms of video!

I tend to associate 'modern' with things like flared trousers (hardly contemporary I know) or stone washed jeans with the knees torn to shreds - ie whatever the latest fashion gimmick happens to be. I can't say I've ever tried to make a film that would look 'modern': I'm not sure I would know how to start. I do want my films to look 'good', or 'attractive', and with shots that are 'well composed' - but 'modern' is a bit beyond my comprehension. What the argument seems to boil down to is that 4:3 is 'old fashioned' - and by implication 'bad' - while 16:9 is 'modern' and 'good'.

Recently I bought my first High Definition camera (which is 16:9 - by definition) and used it on an eight day walking holiday in the Italian alps. Filming every day I brought back over four hours of high definition footage and am currently editing this as my first project in the 16:9 format. I started with favourable expectations as I

thought mountain scenery would be suitable subject matter for the 16:9 format. On previous trips I've filmed 4:3 and found I needed a wide angle lens attached most of the time to get the right perspective, so I was fairly confident that 16:9 would give me the shots I wanted without the need for a supplementary lens.

Surprisingly I found myself disappointed. It is true that wide shots of mountains generally look good in 16:9 but I'm not convinced that they are better than or even as good as 4:3 with a wide angle lens. What I have found particularly disappointing is that when you want to focus on something to give it emphasis, it seems hard to get the effect you want in the widescreen format. Picking out a feature to emphasise - even something as big as the summit of a mountain or a building in a town - can be difficult in 16:9 because there is always this unwanted extra footage to left and right of the main feature which I find distracting.

This becomes particularly frustrating when dealing with small things like flowers or insects, or animals. Gentians, orchids, butterflies, a praying mantis and little lizards, toads or snakes have been common features in my films of mountain walks over the past ten years. But this year's 16:9 shot of a flower



(Fig 1) leaves it looking a bit lost amid the distracting detail flanking it. I wanted to crop it back to 4:3 (Fig 2) to make it look better.

I am not trying to ‘knock’ the 16:9 aspect ratio - I know that it makes some shots look very good and it is obviously here to stay as far as TV and probably film are concerned. I think what I am concerned about is to have good visual composition without slavish adherence to a specific format as supposedly being ‘modern’ and ‘good’. Keen and talented still photographers of my acquaintance would not stick slavishly to



*Fig. 1 The ‘modern’ 16:9 image*



*Fig. 2 The traditional 4:3 image*

the 35mm format but would mask each picture individually to what they felt was the best sized and shaped frame of composition - choosing whatever dimensions they felt the image called for.

It looks as if I will have to film in 16:9 in future but I think I will crop my clips to whatever frame size and shape I think will make them look best. I certainly won’t be trying to keep them looking ‘modern’!

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## Upcoming Projects / Events

Do you have an upcoming film-making project which you would like to invite fellow ECVS film-makers to become involved with? Or perhaps you know about a forthcoming event in Edinburgh and the Lothians that would make a good subject for a film, or provide ECVS with additional footage for our yearly newsreel?



We’ve recently revamped the ‘Projects’ section of the ECVS website to contain a diary of future film making events and opportunities, but we need you, the members, to help keep it up to date! To have an event/project added to the online diary, please email the relevant details e.g. Event Title, Dates, Times (if applicable), Location, Description, contact information (if applicable) to me at [xxxx@xxxxx.co.uk](mailto:xxxx@xxxxx.co.uk) and I’ll add them to the diary.

And if you are looking for a project to get involved with, please visit the Projects section of the website ([www.ecvs.co.uk](http://www.ecvs.co.uk))!

# ECVS Annual Competition 2009

The ECVS Annual Competition for 2009 was held in the clubrooms over the 12th and 13th of March, with the Awards Ceremony on the 24th April. Judging this year was ably performed by Pat Menmuir, Stuart Hutcheson and David Cowie, of Perth Camcorder Club.



*ECVS Award Winners 2008/2009 (left to right): Sean Groat, Bob Bell, Alan Taylor, Jim Closs, Hugh Trevor, Peter Dick*

This years competition had a large number of entries, of a very high standard throughout. The winning films and film-makers were as follows:

LIZARS TROPHY	“Alone” by Alan Taylor
50th ANNIVERSARY TROPHY	“Raising of the Cramond Lioness” by Ron McLaren
ALAN HARPER TROPHY	“Raising of the Cramond Lioness” by Ron McLaren
HENDRY TROPHY	“Three Cities of East Germany” by Hugh Trevor
DOUGLAS TROPHY	“A Glimpse of Iceland” by Jim Closs
THE WAVERLEY PLATE	“Alone” by Alan Taylor
REG CARDEN SCISSORS	“Tatanka” by Bob Bell
THE BILL WALKER TROPHY	“Tatanka” by Bob Bell
THE SCOTIA QUAICH	“Raising of the Cramond Lioness” by Ron McLaren
THE ELLIOT TROPHY	“Iron Man” by Sean Groat
THE BROCK TROPHY	“Trial of Madeline Smith” by Sean Groat
ELENA MAE TROPHY	“A Time to Render” by Sean Groat
THE MARWICK SHIELD	“Tatanka” by Bob Bell
THE VICE-PRESIDENT’S PRIZE	“Raising of the Cramond Lioness” by Ron McLaren
THE FRANK WALKER SALVER	“A New Hope” by Sean Groat
GEORGE MARAN PLAQUE	No Award
NOVICE CUP	No Award

## *Next Issue*

The next issue of CineChat is (tentatively) scheduled for February 2010, 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 22nd January 2010**

