

Cine Chat

August 2006

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

70
YEARS

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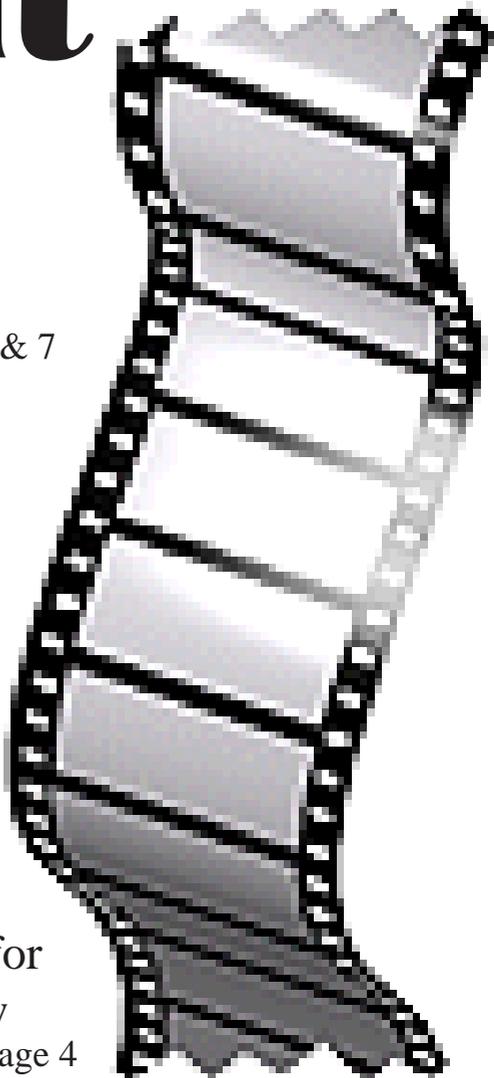
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<http://www.ecvs.co.uk>

About ECVS

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

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

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

CLUBROOMS

23A Fettes Row, Edinburgh, EH3 6RH
Website: <http://www.ecvs.co.uk>

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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.

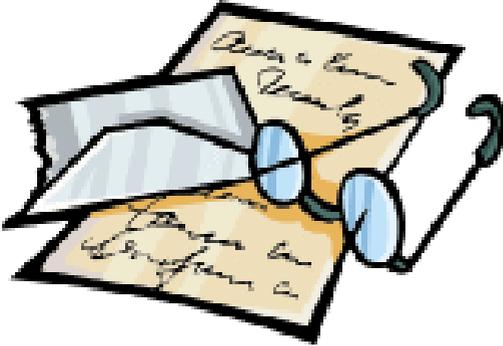
POLICY COMMITMENT:

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 2006 - 2007

President:	Alan Brown
Vice-President:	Stewart Emm
Past President:	Frank Ramsay
Secretary:	Hugh Trevor
Treasurer:	Vic Young
Subscriptions:	John Henry

EDITOR'S COLUMN



Welcome to the August 2006 issue of CineChat! This issue sees me facing something of a quandry, as in the past an easy way to fill a page of the newsletter has been to ask the incoming President to introduce himself and give an idea of what is in store for our members in the coming year. This year, finding myself as said President, it's no longer an easy option! As you will no

doubt already be aware, not least from our new '70 Years' logo on the front of Cine-Chat, 2006 marks the 70th year of Edinburgh Cine and Video Society, quite some achievement by any standards. Both myself and this years Committee are keen to mark this anniversary, with a selection of events and projects scheduled to celebrate and publicise this important milestone in the history of E.C.V.S. Our programme committee have produced a interesting and varied syllabus (expertly designed and printed by Stewart Emm), and I hope that there is something of interest for all members. In particular look out for more announcements regarding our '70th Anniversary Event' on 23rd/24th November, which is the cornerstone of our 70th Anniversary celebrations. In addition, we are holding a 70th Anniversary Video Competition, open to both members and non-members, we hope that this will be a good opportunity to introduce new members to our society, while also showing our members film-making talents to a wider audience. The competition is free to enter, will be independently judged, and boasts a £70 prize, so get your entries in before 1st October!

In addition to the Thursday night programme, Peter Wilson has once again put together an excellent selection of films for the Friday night programme. There's never been a better reason for all our members to attend BOTH Thursday and Friday nights!

I hope you enjoy this issue of Cine-Chat and look forward to celebrating our 70th Anniversary with as many of you as possible over the coming year!



Saving Video Yesterdays for Tomorrow

John L Clark



It's widely reported that VCR manufacturers are cutting back on production and that some have ceased production altogether. One High Street electrical retailer no longer sells VCRs. There seems little doubt that their days are numbered. The successor for the time being is the DVD recorder/player. For a videographer with work stored on SVHS/VHS tape, a bulky medium by today's standards, what impact will this advance in technology have?

Even without the added complication of replacement VCRs becoming unavailable, tape has an indeterminate life expectancy. I have reels of audio tape recorded as far back as 1957 which I was able to play about twenty years ago, audible then if a bit squeaky. Alas, no longer! As my ancient Philips tape recorder's rubber belts have perished and replacements are not now available.



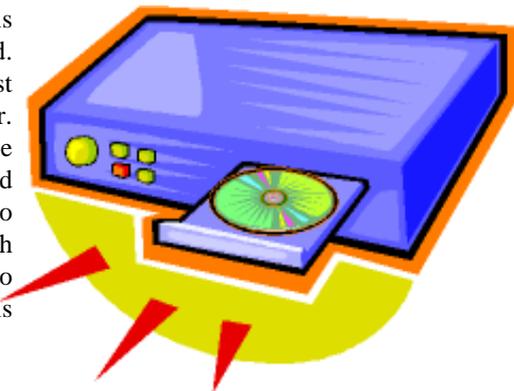
I was reminded of this when recently asked to transfer two VHS training videos to DVDs to preserve their contents for the

future. One about eight years old was in terminal decline, the other much younger was in good shape. Why, I thought, wait for the inevitable when now is the time to think about saving video yesterdays for tomorrow.

If you edit on a computer - or Casablanca - which can burn DVDs, transferring video to DVD is inexpensive and easy, though time-consuming. There are several ways of doing this on a computer. The one I used was to capture the video with an analogue capture card, tidy up the content with my editor and then burn the remastered digital video to a good quality DVD (Ritek is my choice). If capturing from VHS, make sure the capture rate is set for VHS and make sure you reduce the burn quality for the DVD from best quality to one of lower quality, about 250 kbs. Otherwise, your DVD will show some pixilation on playback. It's not possible to improve on original VHS quality, but it is possible using some of the latest editing software to restore declining quality nearer to the original. This does not, however, negate the need to both capture and burn at about the same bit rate to ensure good results.

At the tidy-up stage you might want to: replace a streaky black leader and trailer: cover any damaged video frames with inserts

(copied from other parts of the video), this will leave the associated audio undisturbed. Also, try correcting the brightness/contrast ratio, then try improving the colour. Depending on your editor you might even be able to sharpen a few images where needed or indeed the complete video: consider also replacing your hand printed titles with stylish computer font titles. Finally, don't forget to clean up the audio track if your editor has this facility.



Owing to its large storage capacity a number of videos could be stored on a single DVD. Should you decide to do so, chapters would need to be marked out to allow the videos to be selected for playback in a non-linear way. This facility is a great improvement on the fast forward button of the VCR.

You will be surprised how good your old videos will look when played back on your domestic DVD player. One final tip, which is all important, store your archive DVDs in black storage boxes; never in translucent boxes or sleeves, as DVDs are sunlight sensitive.



Summer Meetings: Feature-Film Viewing Dates

The ECVS Friday-night programme continues on a fortnightly basis over the summer, with a number of feature films scheduled to be shown. All films will be shown in the ECVS clubrooms, on the dates indicated, at 7:30pm.

(Programme details correct at time of going to press, but may be subject to alteration)

July 28th:	Vacation from Marriage (1945: Robert Donat, Deborah Kerr)
August 11th:	Kiss Me Kate (1953: Howard Keel, Kathryn Grayson)
August 25th:	De-Lovely (2005: Kevin Kline)
September 8th:	Flight Plan (2005: Jodie Foster, Sean Bean)

Meet the Committee 2006/2007



Alan Brown
President

Alan has been a member of ECVS for the past 4 years. As well as being this year's President, he is also the editor of Cine-Chat. Alan enjoys making comedy and fiction films and likes to experiment with a range of special effects - usually with mixed results!



Stewart Emm
Vice-President

Stewart has been a member of ECVS for several years and as Vice-President has been integral to the production of this year's Programme. Stewart also does a lot of work publicising the club and encouraging potential new members to join.



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 5 years, and has been secretary for about 3 years. The videos Hugh enjoys making are travel films and documentaries. Hugh has recently completed travel documentaries in locations as diverse as Indonesia, Egypt, Israel, India, Singapore, and most recently, Ethiopia.



John Henry
Subscription Secretary

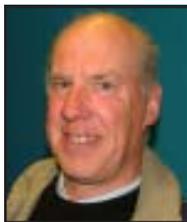
John first joined E.C.V.S in February 1994. He served as a Committee Member for a number of years and was both Vice President and President. For the past six years has held the post of Subscription Secretary and has also organised the Pilgrim Trust Award Competition which attracts entries from throughout the country.



Frank Ramsay
Past President

Frank started film-making in the days of standard-8. He's recently got interested in the hobby again, progressing from SVHS to presently using Mini DV. His main interest is in documentary style productions, which he finds very satisfying to produce, and much pleasure can be gained from the research needed to prepare for them.

Meet the Committee 2006/2007



Bob Bell
Committee Member

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



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 In other words he is movie crazy and with a collection of over 3000 titles that's a description that's hard to dispute. Catch him in action on Friday nights!



Dorothy Speirs
Committee Member

Dorothy has been a member of ECVS for many years. Dorothy is often called upon to utilise her experience of all types of film-making to provide a critique and constructive criticism of less-experienced members films, her comments are always valuable and thought-provoking.



Norman Speirs
Committee Member

Norman has been a member of ECVS for many years, and has served in the role of President several times. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of all the films ECVS have produced and we often call upon his experience and judgement as well as his video-library of past productions!



John Clark
Committee Member

John is a member of the house committee and makes sure the club rooms are always maintained to the usual high standards. John is also a regular contributor to the pages of Cine-Chat and his articles are always well-researched and interesting.



Drew Fleming
Committee Member

Drew is one of our most prolific film-makers and his films are always of an extremely high standard. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Drew has recently experimented with animation, producing some absolutely amazing results.

Making DVDs with a Macintosh Computer

Hugh Trevor



I have found many of the evening lectures at ECVS very interesting and helpful, one such being John Adair's (now moved to New Zealand) on making a DVD, given in the spring of 2005. Initially, to me the lecture seemed more interesting than helpful, in that it had never crossed my mind that I would ever be able to make a DVD – it seemed that only experts like Alan Brown could ever achieve that. Also John's description of how to actually make a DVD (on a PC) seemed so complicated (and not too useful to me, since I have a Mac) that I still never thought that I could make one. However the very next week someone quite unconnected with ECVS to whom I offered some video footage, either in VHS video or mini-DV I said, replied that he would prefer it as a DVD, which coming so soon after John's lecture made me wonder if I could make one after all. None of my Mac-owning friends to whom I usually turn for advice when stuck were into making DVDs, but the Scotsys shop in Edinburgh said it was possible to make a DVD from iMovie (though I use Adobe Premiere for editing), and recommended buying the Manual 'iMovie 4 and iDVD', which I did, and lo and behold, it is dead easy!!

First under the heading Export you Export the Timeline of your Project to Movie (and that is done automatically in QuickTime, which it needs to be – and for a 45 minute project that takes about 30 minutes).

Then you need to Open a new Project in iMovie and import the Quick Time movie you have just made (either drag the icon or use the import button). That takes about another 35 or 40 minutes.

Then you make chapter headings by moving the cursor on the Project which is now on the iMovie timeline to places you want, and click on Open chapter (6 chapters is about right with a 45 minute project), and give each chapter a name.

Then you press the button marked open iDVD. The next bit is slightly fiddly until you get used to it, and that is choosing the Menu pattern. About 40 possibilities are offered (though personally there are only about 4 or 5 that I would ever want to use. Once you choose the menu pattern then you need to drag a few photos from your library of photos to fill the boxes on the menu (I usually choose stills which form part of the project), which prettify the menu.

Then you simply press the button Burn. The disc tray will come out, insert the disc in the tray and insert into the computer, and it carries on automatically from there. Burning the first disc takes over two hours (for a longish project) because the computer is rendering the project before burning. Once the first disc is done, it automatically ejects and further copies of the disc only take from 5 to 20 minutes depending on the length of the Project.

The DVD can either be played from the beginning or from any of the chapter positions.

If you find (as I usually do) that one's DVD, once made is OK, but could do with some improvements (in the movie itself, that is), then one has to go back to the original time line in Adobe Premiere, or whatever editing programme one is using, and make the improvements there and go through the whole process of making a DVD again. But the Mac makes it so simple. Since John's helpful lecture on 'Making DVDs' I have burned between 150 and 200 of them. Hurrah for a Macintosh Computer!



Filming a Documentary

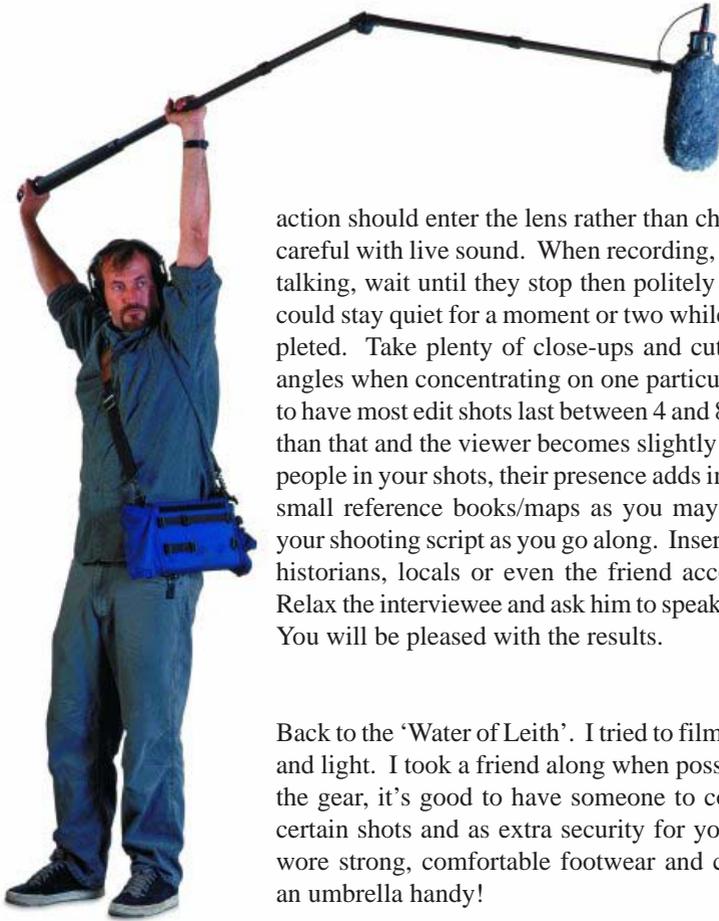
Bob Bell



When making films, my first choice is documentaries. I probably enjoy this most because, they usually have no time restrictions, they are often of historical interest and they always require a lot of research. I place a lot of emphasis on research. You choose your subject and the initial reading leads you into deeper examination. You are committed. Television gives us many tremendous, skilfully made documentaries, e.g. 'The Seven Greatest Industrial Wonders of the World', 'What the Romans Did For Us' etc, especially on the UK TV History Channel. By watching these you can learn techniques in filming and editing.

I am reaching the end of 'The Water of Leith', a fairly short film on the river from source to sea. I started researching over two years ago and it has been extremely enjoyable. Being a member of the Colinton History Society, I have had the advantage of being able to borrow several books from its library. I took from these video footage of pictures, maps, diagrams and this rostrum work produced excellent results.

I planned the making of this documentary along lines used by many previous film makers. Firstly, a shooting script, i.e. picking out the salient points to be included in the narration on the finished film, is compiled. Additional information, e.g. fuller descriptions of locations, people and incidents relevant to the topic, should also be made available and be taken on location when filming. It does not matter in which sequence the film is recorded as it all comes together in the editing process. Focus on what you see on location and visualise on what would be interesting to the viewer. Use a tri-pod whenever possible or attempt to obtain as steady a shot as possible by supporting the camera on or against some fixed object. Panning and zooming should be used sparingly. The



action should enter the lens rather than chase subjects. Be careful with live sound. When recording, if bystanders are talking, wait until they stop then politely ask them if they could stay quiet for a moment or two while filming is completed. Take plenty of close-ups and cutaways. Change angles when concentrating on one particular subject. Aim to have most edit shots last between 4 and 8 seconds, longer than that and the viewer becomes slightly distracted. Film people in your shots, their presence adds interest. Take any small reference books/maps as you may have to expand your shooting script as you go along. Insert interviews with historians, locals or even the friend accompanying you. Relax the interviewee and ask him to speak when prompted. You will be pleased with the results.

Back to the 'Water of Leith'. I tried to film in good weather and light. I took a friend along when possible to help with the gear, it's good to have someone to confer with about certain shots and as extra security for your equipment. I wore strong, comfortable footwear and clothing and had an umbrella handy!

I favour social documentaries and like focussing on local natural assets which are often taken for granted but documentaries can be made on any subject, architecture, transport, people, shopping trends, cinemas, just to name a few. By making a film like this today, you are able to give pleasure to future generations by recording archive material.

Note: A narration script has not been included in this article. The subject is too complex to explain in general terms.

	Edinburgh Cine & Video Society 70th Anniversary Video Competition Entry Date 1 October 2006
To mark their 70th year ECVS have organized a video competition for amateur moviemakers in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Entry to the competition is free A prize of £70 will be awarded to the winner.	
Download entry form from www.ecvs.co.uk	

LATE NEWS

Request for Members Films

Each year E.C.V.S is contacted by other clubs throughout the country requesting a compilation DVD/tape of members productions. The Committee respond to all these requests, and send a compilation of whatever films we have available at the time, however we are aware that there are a large number of members films, of high quality, that are shown at our Thursday 5-minute video nights. and never seen again. In short, there are a number of members films that are not getting the wider audience that they deserve!

The Committee are at present compiling a number of film selections, to be used when we have requests for members film compilations, and we want your films!

If you have a film, not necessarily a new film, and you would like it to be viewed by a wider audience, please contact me, Alan Brown, either by phone - 0131 672 3818, or in person on a club night, or via the Cine Chat mailbox in the clubrooms, to arrange for the digitising of your film, with a view of including it on one of our future club members compilations. We're looking for films on all types of subjects, and all sorts of films. (although a length of no more than 15 minutes is ideal for compilations)

Let's show these other clubs the variety and breadth of
E.C.V.S. members film-making talents!

