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The Journal of Surrey Border Movie Makers
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SEE THE LIGHT!

An Instructional Club Meeting at a Photographic Studio

*Written and photographed
by Peter Frost
with additional information and
photographs from
Jason and Kathy Butcher.*

Following a very successful presentation at a club 'Technical Evening', which featured four different demo areas, one of which was that of Jason Butcher who explained the use of lighting to create mood. He offered to invite some members to his photographic and video studio if there was enough interest. There was and this was enlarged to be a full club meeting at his studio on Friday, 7th June.

Arriving with chairs as there was limited seating available, we settled down to an evening all about lighting for an interview and the creation of mood by various different techniques.



But first, I had to make a presentation to Brian O'Connell who, being the sole entrant of my Competition for 'Best photograph of the Netflix Village constructed at Frensham Little Pond' won my valuable prize - a superb Canon Telephoto Lens, no, a Cup! A coffee cup in the shape of a tele lens - an appropriate novelty I felt for the occasion and especially for Brian who has a couple of Canon DSLRs.



Brian O'Connell, proud holder of the cup-that-looks-like-a-tele-lens!



Jason explained that it is necessary to think how the scene is to look - what lighting emphasis is required to achieve the aim of the director. Jason used a DMX box to remotely control the level of light from each flood lamp, in this case the club's own set of three Redheads, used to show that you don't have to have the latest LED technology to light well. They have a broad and narrower beam setting and barn doors to control the spread of light individually.

Josh Stonehill volunteered rather willingly as the 'talent interviewee' from the audience and took his position on the stool in front of the backdrop of grey material.

As Jason said, the five different styles of light demonstrated before the green screen can be shot hard or soft, it's the position of the lights which determines where the light falls. Using diffusion obviously softens the light, but its use may depend on the subject matter of the interview (or story), which also goes for any flagging of the light to cut it from the talent.

A waveform monitor was used to gauge exposure and distribution of light across the frame, among other useful features.



Waveform Monitor



A clutter of clamps - essential tools, always!

In his demonstration Jason used it to judge exposure of the facial tones and to help with exposure and later to spread evenness of light over the green screen.

To be effective, we were told that it was most important to think first and work out where the emphasis of light should be to create the desired mood.

A single Redhead was placed to the left of the subject for the following lighting styles.

Rembrandt - a hard side light with a focussed direct lighting bright spot triangle on the subject's cheek and nose. But this can then be controlled with the use of 'flags' - small boards used to mask off part of the light falling on the subject so as to create a more interesting and softer appearance, depending on the purpose of the shoot or mood required.



Rembrandt Lighting, hard with no fill

Other options for Rembrandt Lighting appear over continues over



Rembrandt Lighting
with fill, hair and
background lit



Rembrandt Lighting
with fill, hair CT blue gel
and background lit



Flagging to create
a light shaft

In the above three examples, notice the shaft of light on the background, achieved by using two flags on stands to mask off all but a thin slit of light from the lamp.

It is a technique that Alan Hussey used in a previous club movie, *Cube3*, to great effect. His flag had a series of parallel slits cut into it casting a shadow on the wall of a police office set which looked every bit like a Venetian blind, as shown below.



Imaginative use of flags can clearly help create atmosphere and in this case, make a flat wall and the scene more interesting.

Alan Butcher 'volunteered' to hold the CT blue gel and regretted it as his arms ached!



Split Lighting,
hard with fill

Loop Lighting - this spreads light onto more of the face, but again, flags can be used to aid control of light.

Split Lighting - The split lighting is about a side on position to the talent. The effect is to cut the face in half with all the light on one side and the other side in shadow. But of course 'Reflectors' can be employed to soften the shadow side and bring back some modelling.

Broad Lighting - Is named due to lighting the broad / largest side of the talents face - so in Jason's demonstration he had lit the talent on the side of face pointing towards the camera with the smaller part of the face showing in shadow.

Clamshell / Beauty / Butterfly Lighting - so called because it beautifies the subject and would be the choice for modelling, perhaps for a magazine cover.



Clamshell Lighting
no fill

A '**Diffuser**' was then introduced to show how the source lighting can be softened for a less stark appearance. This can also be achieved with additional light sources and another of the club's Redheads was used to demonstrate the creativity for modelling the subject.

A '**Floor Kicker**' can be added to under light the subject and soften areas under the chin for a more flattering appearance.

All this time, Josh sat without flinching on the stool and I was mightily impressed as I have been a model for an art group, sitting while they all drew or painted my portrait and have to admit that I fell asleep through boredom and was shouted at to wake up!



TEA BREAK! And some personal experience

While tea was taken to refresh us (Jason seemed to need no such stimulant) he set up the Greenscreen background to run over the best method of use in the second part of the evening.

During our years as graphic designers, we have designed and built sets for video shoots and art directed many product and portrait shoots for use in advertising literature that we had designed.

Some of the most demanding were for *Robinsons Baby Foods and Drinks*. Often, these were pack shots with the ingredients tastefully arranged around the pack. No computers were around in those days, so our photographer would use Polaroids to test the exposure. To balance or concentrate light from the main light source, a key light on one side and softbox to reduce shadows on the other, various small reflectors (small pieces of white card) were set close to the product to give highlights.

It was a very long process to achieve the one ideal shot as clients like Robinsons would expect the very best presentation of their products. We often had to shoot fruit that was out of season which proved a challenge, bearing in mind that the photographer would need time to make adjustments and sliced apple goes brown (for example).



Robinsons range of Baby Foods with ingredients artistically arranged. Note that while the grains are carefully gathered on the left, three peas are separated on the right to add a little jauntiness!

Even worse were fruit drinks as we would often have to shoot fruit that was out of season and use frozen fruit instead. Raspberries and blackcurrants become very sloppy once thawed, so it was a race to get shots done with fruit being patted dry so carefully.



Above: Coleman's Sausage Casserole promotion. Think it looks tasty? But hot casserole creates steam on the camera lens, so the dish is actually cold and coated with baby oil to make it look as though it's sizzling! That's the yumminess of marketing for you!

And back to Jason's Studio

It was good to see that four of our new members were present: **John Keeling; Jack Visser; Nigel Mee** and **Garry Green** who had brought along his friend, Nia Mason, a journalist who is an interested amateur photographer. It was also good to see **Paul Vernon** from Solent Movie Makers.

One of the most important factors in the use of greenscreen is to have it as smooth as possible using clamps as tensioners on a frame and volunteers from the audience were encouraged set it up correctly. Or a pop up greenscreen with built in tension could be used. Green is usually the colour choice but a blue screen is not only used when green may show in the scene but due to it's lower luminance can be used with subjects/objects with more reflective surfaces.

Even lighting is also essential and is achieved using diffusion material or softboxes to create an even, soft light. If possible, light the greenscreen from the top and bottom as this gives a good even coverage. Jason pointed out a wrinkle in the greenscreen on the monitor picture, but Peter Stratford and I were darned if we could see anything.



Photos: Above - Mike takes it all in. Members help with setting reflectors and diffusers.



Photos above - Greenscreen background now in place showing the monitor view above the camera view - the left is Book Lighting, without any fill; on the right is with fill.

You see so many wrinkles in the mirror each morning that you become immune to them and take a more relaxed, slightly fuzzy, view of everything, anyway.

Another factor is to make sure the subject is separated from the background. This is done with a good distance between the screen and the subject (space allowing!) and separate lighting control for background and subject, so these are independently adjustable.

Spill light from the subject may create shadows which will show in post, so flagging is again employed. In reverse, a green cast from the screen can appear on the subject and again lighting positioning and adjustment with flagging can remove it but if it's not possible, a magenta gel can be used to counteract and cancel the green colouring.

Then there's the choice of camera aperture to achieve what is wanted. Clearly there's more to it, of course, but these are key points in brief.

Jason's studio has a 'floating ceiling' which can be raised, lowered, angled, even stood vertically as a background, the sort of luxury that we can only dream of for our productions.

What an interesting evening it was with a chance to look around a working studio.

At the end of the evening, Mike thanked Jason and gave him the traditional and well deserved bottle. I feel Josh also deserved our grateful thanks for sitting so patiently as the Subject / Talent / Interviewee / Guinea-pig so that we could really see the effect of the lighting and flagging demonstration.

Josh, thank you very much!



Above - Diffused lighting with large black flag (polystyrene sheet painted black) to the right. Kathy photographer. Jason at work. Josh still upright!

TAIL PIECE

by Peter Frost

Oh, I've said it before but Border Post can only continue with your regular items and photos - **without being prompted each month!**

So for the August issue of BP each of the FIAE Groups should write about their entry, the whys, hows, whats and wheres - with photos! Couldn't be easier, could it?

Paul Saban is now in a position to pick up the reigns as your Editor, so he will be needing your contributions for August and every month.

The main article in this issue discusses technical lighting information, so I had it checked by Jason as I wanted it to be

accurate. Trying to write down what's being said and take photographs as well, while you were all enjoying Jason Butcher's demonstration, meant that I had a few facts twisted and as a result I had to revise my original layout which meant that it has taken 18 hours to produce, without the original note taking and photography that I did!

But with other articles and items coming from members across the club, it can be a much quicker process, and let's face it, as an ex-pro, I go the extra mile on presentation and spend a lot of time on tweaks.

So please support Paul and allow him to continue producing the club magazine / newsletter that I have put so very much time and effort into.

Thank You!

Border Post Contributors!

These members helped me by contributing to this issue: Jason and Kathy Butcher. Everyone else seemed to be on holiday!

COPY DEADLINE!

August 2019 edition will be 20th of July

with **no extensions.**

Late copy will be carried over to the next month. Thank you for your co-operation - Ed!



NEXT MEETING

Friday 5th July Film in an Evening. Groups have 3 hours to film and edit then show the results at the club.

MORE DATES 2019

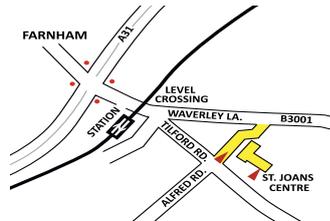
- ▶ **Sunday 14th July** Summer Social BBQ at Rita and Al's
- Fri 2nd August** A selection of films to enjoy
- Fri 6th September** Documentary Competition - entries no longer than 20 mins
- Fri 4th October** Inter Club Competition
- Fri 1st November** (Hoped to be Paul Vernon showing some of his short films, operation recovery permitting)
- DEADLINE for Club Comp - Films of 6 mins or less, please.**
- Fri 6th December** Club Competition

COME AND SEE WHAT WE DO!

See what other movie makers are up to and you may get some inspiration for your own projects. We always welcome new members and you can sound us out for free, too. You can find out more about us by visiting our web site www.surreyborder.org.uk or email the secretary: secretary@surreyborder.org.uk We are also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SurreyBorderMovieMakers/timeline>

Meetings are held at St Joan's Centre, 19 Tilford Road, Farnham GU9 8DJ on the 1st Friday of each month at 7.30pm for 7.45pm. Meetings close around 10.15pm. When coming for the first time, please email: secretary@surreyborder.org.uk or turn up at the door!

St Joan's Centre is 200 yards south of Farnham station and is in the grounds of St Joan's Church. The entrance to the church is by a narrow road opposite the junction with Alfred Road, and St Joan's Centre is to the right of the church. There is ample parking.



REMEMBER!
Your first visit is free!

Our members range from beginners to ex professionals, shooting video with DSLR Cameras, Camcorders and Phones, editing on both Mac and PC platforms. But that's not all, we welcome those who want to learn or participate in all aspects of movie making, whether it's to improve your family and holiday films or write scripts, produce storyboards, direct, arrange lighting, edit, make props, act, learn about equipment, help out as crew or whatever you are interested in. You are welcome to take a look at us as detailed above.

Border Post