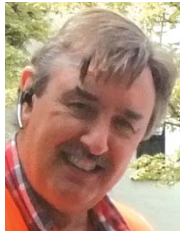




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The Journal of Surrey Border Movie Makers
www.surreyborder.org.uk

BUMPER STORY/SCRIPT WRITING ISSUE



Message from your new Chairman - John Mills:

Following the AGM I first want to say thanks to Mike for the excellent job he has done as Chairman and also acknowledge the brilliant work the

committee have done on our behalf over the last year. I am sure you will all join with me in a resounding THANK YOU!

Now that Christmas is a distant memory, trying to decide what to make a film

about springs to mind. One of the great things about being in a club is having your peers critique your work, the ultimate goal being to produce a film that just results in uproarious applause.

Getting those aha!! moments is great and brainstorming on your own is a challenge, but having a note book handy and listing down potential ideas when they spring to mind is a great idea for impending group get togethers. A great little app for this is 'Simple Mind' and its free for Pad or Computer.

Hello Everyone!

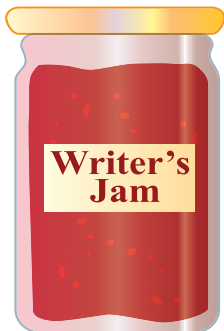
So, lets get those ideas developing ready to formulate into a winning production.

With the Kempton project in mind, if you have a pet project or dream the club can film, lets take a look by submitting your idea to the committee. **Happy film making!**

... And if you're interested, here's a FREE course I've just joined run by the NFTS and BFI to help:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-filmmaking>

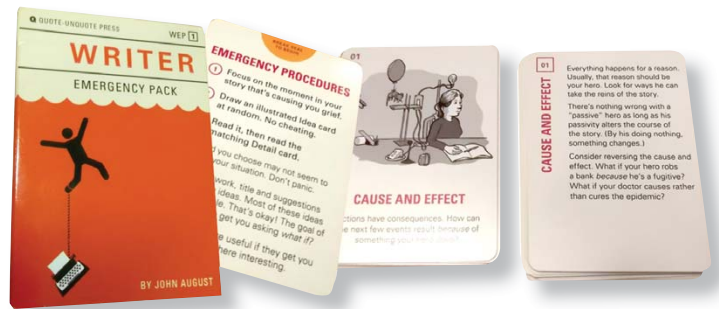
Reminder! Next meeting is Friday 10th April (not the 3rd!)



Written and photographed by Jeremy Bayne-Powell. Illustration by Peter Frost

It's been a while since I contributed to Border Post; hopefully I have something you will all find interesting.

some interesting ideas for story development. There are 26 picture cards each with a 'topic', from



'Cause and Effect' (pictured) to cards like 'Morgan Freeman' and 'Magnify'. Each picture card has a corresponding detail card. You are supposed to pick a picture card at random when you get stuck with the story then read it and the corresponding detail card. Whilst they may not necessarily solve your immediate problem they are designed to make you think "what if?" Who knows where it may take you!

I paid \$41.00 for my two packs (plus the two pack donation) and have since signed up for a limited 'black' edition version of the cards.

Writer Emergency Pack was designed as a deck of printed cards rather than an app or a website so that you're never distracted by digital doodads. For most writers, physical is the right choice. But for some writers, print is tough. One backer wrote that her cerebral palsy made it difficult to hold things. Another's friend is a screenwriter and author -- theoretically the perfect user for the pack -- except he's blind. He uses special software to read things aloud.

Ryan Nelson spent the past few weeks working on an accessible version. You can find it online at:

<http://writeremergency.com/accessibility>

To most of us, it looks like a straight forward, bare-bones web page. Under the hood, he's built in tags and semantic markers to make it work better with screen readers and other software for writers with different needs.

The Pack was designed as a give-one-get-one campaign. Now that almost all the decks are out to backers, focus has shifted to getting decks to youth writing program partners. John is working with NaNoWriMo to get these decks in 2,000 classrooms this autumn. In addition to nudging would-be novelists each November, NaNoWriMo has a Young Writers Program complete with lesson plans and materials for grade school though high school.

John hopes to have Writer Emergency Packs available to purchase again in March. Supplies will be limited, especially at the start, so if you or your friends want

For a number of years now I have been listening to a weekly podcast 'Scriptnotes' produced by Hollywood writer John August (*Go, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Frankenwenie*) and his co-host writer Craig Mazin (*The Hangover Parts 2 and 3, Identity Thief*). Now at episode 183, this excellent podcast is a superbly rich resource and I would urge anyone interested in filmmaking to listen, particularly if you like to write. You can find 'Scriptnotes' at:

johnaugust.com/scriptnotes

Recently John was promoting a kickstarter campaign to produce a pack of cards that would help writers stuck with their stories and at the same time help youth writing programmes. For every pack purchased, John would donate one to the kids. So I got involved in my first Kickstarter campaign and backed John in his creation of the 'Writer Emergency Pack - helping writers get unstuck'.

My packs arrived in time for Christmas making a great present for myself and they are excellent quality and do offer up

continues on p2

to be notified the minute they become available, they have a sign-up list at: <http://writeremergency.com> Two weeks ago, they did a trial run with 400 decks in

the store. They sold out in 45 minutes. So once again we are thinking about the story for this year's North vs South competition with the theme 'Broken', perhaps these cards can help us come up

with and develop another cracking story to challenge the competition and break the dominance of the northern clubs!

(We hope this **Script and Story** Issue of *Border Post* will help stimulate ideas! Ed.)

Double Whammy!

by Peter Frost

In another hobby lifetime in my late teens and early twenties, as a keen 8mm film maker, at nineteen I joined Epsom Cine Society (ECS) to further my enjoyment.

I was soon deeply involved having been persuaded (you know how it goes) to join the ECS committee. In 1966 I masterminded, with the help of a fellow lunatic, an elaborate annual event, a **Car Treasure Hunt and Film in a Day** for the club's Summer Challenge Cup - a double whammy! This involved a route to drive with clues to be found while travelling from one countryside or village location to another. At each location we provided an outline script to give participating members and their families the gist of a story to be filmed. Ambitious? Certainly but it became rather popular.

The Box: In 1966, my workplace was next to an importer of furniture and I managed to obtain some rather enormous cardboard boxes from them. Members assembled unknowingly at Headley Heath near Epsom and were given the 'script' and a cardboard box each. The 'script' gave general instruction such as 'Actor staggers into shot carrying a huge box which he treats with great care'. It was up

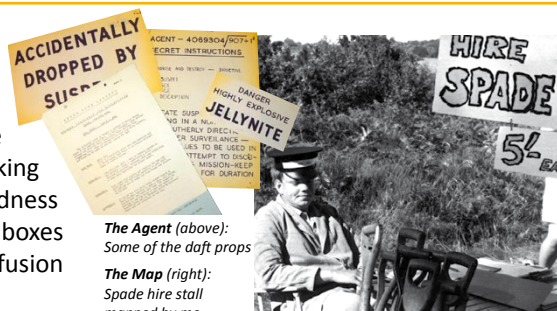
to members to build on this on the day. This popular picnic and walking place soon became enveloped in madness as people struggled with ungainly boxes in all directions much to the confusion and amusement of other visitors.

Another venue had the instruction: 'Actor takes his box into the phone box and makes a call'. A real challenge as the boxes would only just fit let alone with someone making a call! Other 'tight' situations to negotiate were a narrow bridge, a gap in a hedge and hitching a lift with the box.

Some hilarious films resulted, whether or not the reason for the action was ever explained, and the whole event was voted a great success.

The Map: 1967's film subject was a Treasure Hunt. I made a very real looking grave stone for this which was set up at a location on Farley Heath where there was a convenient mound for the grave. The various treasure hunting actors were to sit on the grave while having their lunch.

Later at Albury they encountered a 'Spade for Hire Stall' where I was the attendant hiring members' own spades back to them for a fiver! It was only later at tea



The Agent (above): Some of the daft props

The Map (right): Spade hire stall manned by me

time that I heard that the grave mound was actually a large ants nest!

The Agent: 1968 had a suspect being tracked by an M.I.4 Agent, from M.I.4 H.Q., hidden in a bush. Many extremely obvious clues were distributed along the way including a red herring, literally! A rather cunning filmic prop for the Agent to follow were footprints along a lakeside which even extended out onto the water itself!

Enormous fun though they were, these events took a huge amount of recce time, props making and story planning so rather simpler story suggestions were adopted after this. However, given a theme and a sketchy outline, entertaining films can develop on a more or less impromptu basis. Stuck for a script? Why not try it?

Although the answers to clues may not all remain, 45 years on and the routes and 'scripts' still exist! Let me know if you want to copy them but there will be no props.

Sarah's War

Brian belongs to the **London Writers and Actors Group** based in Hammersmith who write and perform members' plays and I went along at his request to film a performance of his play 'Sarah's War' set in 1944, so that he could study it later, as he was handling all the sound effects and would be too busy to watch.

There was no scenery apart from appropriate dress for the actors and they read from the script with sound effects that Brian had compiled, so it was rather like being at the recording of a radio play.

A failed German commando raid has tried to destroy the undersea pipeline that supplied the allies with fuel after the Normandy invasion. A sole survivor, Klaus, attempts to complete the mission by commandeering an English vessel with only a grandfather and his grand daughter, Sarah, on board.

Text compiled from Brian O'Connell's notes and photo grabs from the video

Triggered by a visit to Peter Matthew's boat in the Hamble Estuary, story telling seems to come naturally to Brian as his wartime nautical terms are convincing and he builds on tension and excitement.

Wind on three years after the war and Klaus, an ex-prisoner of war, tracks down and meets up with Sarah, now a homeless unmarried mother living in a hostel run by German hating Mrs Smith, resulting in unfolding dramatic and unforeseen consequences for young Sarah.

The play ran for about an hour and a half, after which Brian took comments and questions from the audience. He had a very good response and also received some constructive points.

(Brian has booked to have his play performed during the Guildford Fringe Festival in July - details later - Ed.)



Actors Sophie Morris Shepherd (Sarah); Patrick Deony (Klaus); Hilary Field (Mrs Smith). The play was directed by Martin Cort. Brian seen taking comments



Written by
Jacqueline Escolme
Illustration by Peter Frost

I have never been a fan of vacuuming. The pointless repetition of cleaning something only to watch it become dirty again within a matter of hours seems like a complete waste of time. Polishing on the other hand, offers greater rewards. The glisten of a sideboard endures for a couple of days and fairly screams perfection. Layers of polishing create an even greater effect, and so it is with writing. Once polished, always improved upon.

So before you put away your pens and close your PC with a smug smile assuming your story is complete, think again. The perfect polish will create fluidity and fluency that even your best draft so far is lacking. Fact.

I'm a great believer that there's no such thing as a finished script. Ever. Words are promiscuous things that can always be improved upon, but at some point, one has to stop. When I reach what I instinctively feel is my "final" draft, whether it's number five or fifty, I put a stake in the ground and walk away (sometimes with a bottle in hand.) This is my preparation to polish.

When I return, days, or ideally weeks or months later, I am re-energized for the story. I read it more clearly. Scenes that seemed important now appear redundant. Plot holes gape at me. Such are the opportunities that a polish presents and it should be a playful and enjoyable process. Yes, there may be changes, but the fundamentals of the script have become part of my very existence and the whole practice begins to feel like a good gossip with a friend.

If you are sitting with a "finished" piece of writing, or have perhaps never considered

a good polish before, here are some helpful hints....dusters at the ready!

Leave as much time as possible between your last draft and the polish. Distance creates clarity and allows you to ask pertinent questions from a more neutral perspective.

Get someone to read your script (and be honest about it) before you return to it. I rely on a good friend of mine who tells me if the story's not holding him or feels contrived. I had a character set in her forties and she wasn't working for me. After a quick read he pointed out that she talked and acted as if she were fifty. He was right. Once I allowed her the additional maturity she came alive. A fresh pair of eyes can provide a unique assessment of where your story's working, or otherwise.

Start by re-visiting your plan Remind yourself of the story you were hoping to create. The turning points, the tension, the climax. As you re-read, actively go in search of this. If you don't find it, you have a problem.

Print it out and read it on paper Yes I know we need to save trees, but there are mistakes that life dictates are seen more easily against the backdrop of white paper.

Double the power of your spell check Certainly you're looking for spelling mistakes, but also try to cut out any repetition, or unnecessary words. Use grammar to streamline your read. Cut any dialogue that doesn't drive the story and be vigilant about finding new and better words to express what you mean. I have a "Flip" Dictionary by my side at all times.

Chop and change Be prepared to cut where necessary. All writers overwrite. I like to be a couple of thousand words over-budget to allow for this. It stops the paranoia when I cut whole scenes and means I don't panic about my word or page count.

A final point to remember is to be generous with your polishing time. This is the icing on your cake and it will pay dividends. If you're polishing someone else's work

allow extra time to get into the story and characters, so you can add value rather than just spell and structure check.

For my first polishing job on someone else's work, I rashly allowed a week for a full length feature script, **The Distance Between Us**. Three weeks later I begged for more time but production had started. That's L.A for you!



Jacqueline found this project on line through ISA (International Screenwriter's Association) but still awaits payment as the film has yet to turn a profit although awarded: 'Winner, Best Narrative Feature' in the World's Independent Film Festival 2014. However, she says it was a great experience and earned her her first IMDb credit (International Movie Database) which is payment in itself. She is credited as (joint) Script Editor on the IMDb and Assistant Dialogue Writer in the poster crew listing. You can read about the film at the link ending this article.

Now I allow more time (and more alcohol) and while polishing can sometimes feel like the straw that's about to break the camel's back, it's always worthwhile. It's easy to scan your work, dot an "i" and cross a "t" here and there. That's not a polish. If the story doesn't engage you enough to re-read and re-write time and time again, don't expect anyone else to bother either. The perfect polish is pouring your heart and soul into each word so that, should it by chance win an Oscar, you will stand justifiably proud.

<http://www.distancebetweenus.com/>

Screenwriting Exercises

By Rita Wheeler

It's March already and groups will be forming for the Film in an Evening. The theme this year is "Behind closed doors". So, where can we go with this? How to get an idea? This is one technique you can try. Cut out any interesting headlines from newspapers or magazines, it works better

Who? What? Where? When? Why?

if you have at least thirty. Put them in a container and randomly take out seven. Then see what you've got and weave a story round it. If you aren't inspired by the ones you've pulled out you can always swop to see if something better comes up.

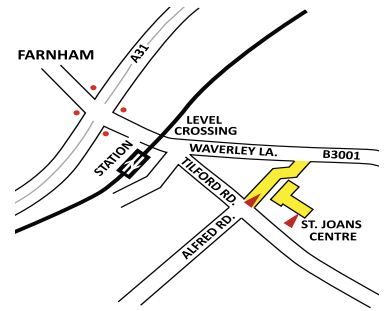
Here's one I did earlier... "Lazy days ahead", "Wild at heart and wildly successful",

"Resolutions are discussed", "Sharks continue winning ways", "Thieves target cats" "Bletchley was no enigma to goose that never cackled", "Where am I? Who am I?" O-kay... perhaps not the best choice but we can possibly use the "Where am I? Who am I?" You don't

Continued on page 4
Page 3

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. New members are very welcome, 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.



Border Post next issue

Look out for a full report on the BVE (Broadcast and Video Exhibition) at London's Excel which a number of members will have visited at the end of February. The focus is 4k video and if you have £20,000 to spare (plus another £4,000 for VAT), you can have your own 4k, 3 Camera Studio set up - so who's going to be first?



But it won't be all high tech. - promise!

Screenwriting Exercises *continued from p3*

have to use them all. Apply the question, What if...? What if... I woke up behind a closed door and didn't know who I was? Another good one is the WHO + WHAT + WHY + WHEN + WHERE = STORY. It's a bit like the game of consequences you possibly played as a child.

WHO? Fred Blogs WHAT? He didn't return from the department store. WHY? He'd maxed out on his credit cards and was caught shoplifting. WHEN? It happened the day of their engagement party. WHERE? He's now behind closed doors and is too embarrassed to ring his fiancée. Hope this helps to get those creative brains turning.

Dates for your Diary

Friday 6th March 2015:

A fun technical evening with demonstrations of lighting, green screen techniques and audio.

Friday 10th April 2015: (NOT 3rd April!)

3rd April is Good Friday, so make a note of the change of date. Edit exercise - make a short film about anything, no scene to be longer than 3 seconds. 2nd half, 'How to Make a Documentary'.

Friday 1st May:

Film in an Evening

Friday 12th June 2015: (NOT 5th June!)

A selection of films from the Australian 2014 Wide Screen Film Festival and Discussion. See what they have been doing down under!

Press Release *by Rita Wheeler*

The AGM (Annual General Meeting) took place on Friday 6th Feb. Mike Sanders stood down after his 3 year tenure and John Mills was voted in as the new Chairman. After the various reports were read and the committee was voted in the AGM was closed.



In the second half of the evening Peter Matthews demonstrated the quality of video that could be shot on the latest Apple iPhone 6+ and the ease of editing. However, currently most of the members still prefer the traditional way of filming and editing using a camera and editing suite.

The club is looking forward to another busy and active year with members creating short films for the **Edit Exercise** in April, followed by groups getting together for an evening of film making fun with the annual **Film in an Evening** competition in May.

Your Club Contacts

	Name:	Email:
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Chairman	John Mills	chairman@surreyborder.org.uk
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Hon. Treasurer	Gillian Gatland	treasurer@surreyborder.org.uk
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Public Relations Officer	Kathy Butcher	pro@surreyborder.org.uk
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Social Events	Committee	socialevents@surreyborder.org.uk

Border Post

Your contributions for inclusion will be appreciated together with photographs if possible. Please send them to Guest Editor, Peter Frost, for the April issue at this email: peter@papercourt.co.uk