It's a giant polypore, of course!

Header Photo Sasakia Frost
Creation Peter Frost

Note: Although I would normally play around with photos, this is genuine and fungus and grandchild are true to size and in the same shot!

A celebration of John Grierson

By Dave Skertchly

September is the date for the Clubs annual documentary competition and I thought it might be good, by way of preparation, for us to celebrate John Grierson, the pioneer of documentary as an art form and founder of the influential Film Board of Canada.

"In an age when the faiths, the loyalties, and the purposes have been more than usually undermined, mental fatigue or is it spiritual fatigue, represents a large factor in everyday experience. Our cinema does no more than exploit the occasion. He also, more or less frankly, is a "dope pedlar".

In his essay "First Principles of Documentary" (1932), Grierson argued that the principles of documentary were that cinema's potential for observing life could be exploited in a new art form; that the "original" actor and "original" scene are better guides than their fiction counterparts to interpreting the modern world; and that materials "thus taken from the raw" can be more real

than the acted article. In this regard, Grierson's views align with the Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov's contempt for dramatic fiction as "bourgeois excess", though with considerably more subtlety. Grierson's definition of documentary as "creative treatment of actuality" has gained some acceptance, though it presents philosophical questions about documentaries containing staging's and re-enactments.
Food for thought!

Table of Contents

MAKING MOVIES ON YOUR SMART PHONE
by Kathy Butcher

Most people these days constantly have their smart phones with them. They are often used to take brilliant photos, but we can also use them to take professional looking movies.

The Vice Chairman of Surrey Border Movie Makers Philip Morley hosted the club meeting in August to present
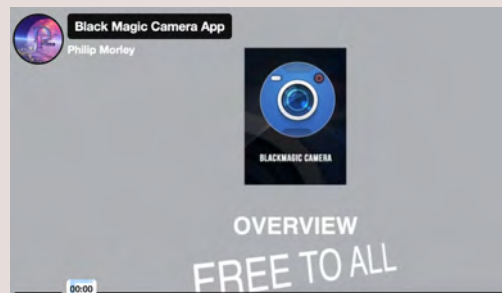
the audience with a comprehensive look at using Blackmagic Camera App for an Apple or Android smartphone.

The results can produce cinema quality films and have been used to make several very successful mainstream professional productions.

If you are considering making a movie with a smartphone they have a lot of plus points, they are small, convenient and nearly always to hand, everything you need is available reducing the need to carry sound and lighting equipment etc.

You can use them in small spaces where large conventional cameras are too bulky to fit, they are a lot cheaper to buy than expensive dedicated film cameras and associated filming gear, and the smartphone results are very impressive.

Philip produced and narrated three films which showed the settings and capabilities of Blackmagic software including how it can be used to control multi cameras on set and pull focus over time.
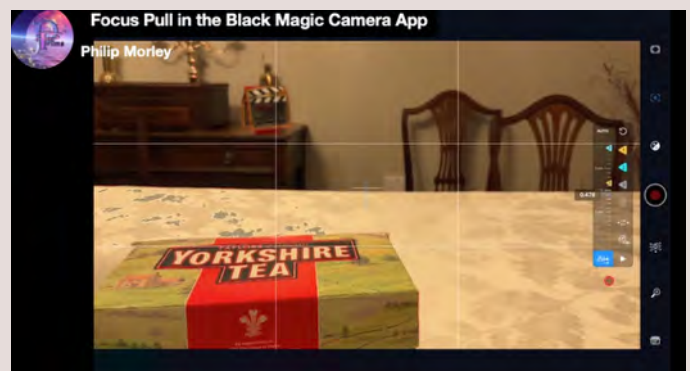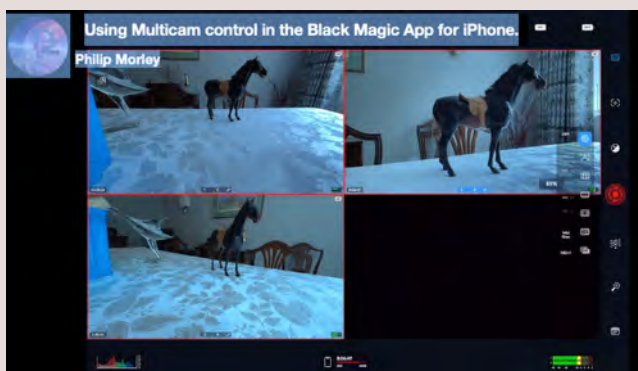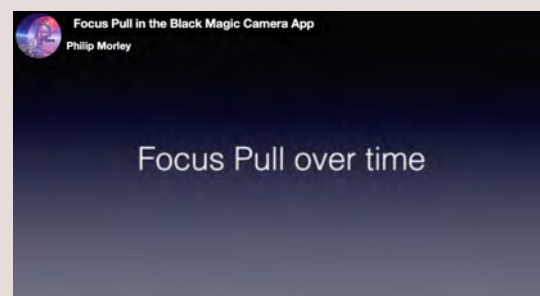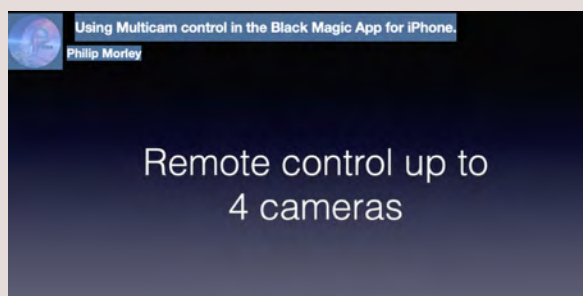
There were breaks between the three films which gave the audience the opportunity to ask questions, of which there were many.

Following Philips presentation, the audience were shown two films made by club member John Hawthorne, 'The Caves of Surrey' and 'Mother Ludlam's Cave' and two films by member Paul Ashworth's 'Langham Brewery Tour' and also 'Annapurna Eco Village which he visited 18 months after their devastating earthquake had taken place.

The four excellent and interesting films had never been shown at the club before, and the audience were invited to give their comments.

Overall, It was an incredibly successful and enjoyable evening.

SURREY BORDER MOVIE MAKERS WELCOMES JOHN HAWTHORNE AS NEW COMPETITION OFFICER

Hi,
I'm John Hawthorne . In case you are wondering about my back story I have organised a few competitions in the dark and distant past , but alas not film related. In my previous life I was a Sports shopkeeper in Fetcham and Wallington. I

I used to organise Tennis Competitions at South Croydon Tennis Club and Sutton Highfields. The key is that people have to enjoy taking part - ideally we want people to relish the competition so it's not a chore to get a film entry done...

With Sport it's relatively easy but when you are talking about something more artistic with "wishy washy" and the undefined parameters of Filming, it becomes more complex. So bear with me.... I'm bound to have a few "cock-ups". I will probably try something really simple that anyone can have a bit of fun doing but also lets those with ambition run wild - but what on earth is that???? LOL

I will try my best..... Stay tuned for "cock-up Mark One"

JUST AS YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO OUT

STARRING
JIM REED, AL BUTCHER, CATHY BUTCHER

Worst Film 2025

THAY STILL LYVETH AMUNG US
THE TEDIOUS STORY OF DAVE SKERTCHLY'S "BELL BOOK AND CANDLE"

Bell, Book and Candle

by Dave Skertchly

1 Bell Book and Candle has been on the stocks for some years, harking back to the club horror film challenge. It tells the story of a Vampire living in a village in Dorset at the time of the Norman Conquest. The story is recorded on the missing panels of the Bayeux Tapestry which were discovered recently hanging in the Church at Winterbourne Dauntsey. It is on the A338 road about 3.5 miles northeast of Salisbury should you wish to see it, but before setting off don't forget the theme of the challenge! Jim Reed spotted that the story in cut down form would fit the 2025 group challenge, so after completion of my University assignments I had just 3 weeks to make an animation film. Jim, as ever was really helpful for discussing new ideas and trying out new things. It's a surprising professional relationship between us, given that we are so different in our approaches but it works!... Thanks Jim!
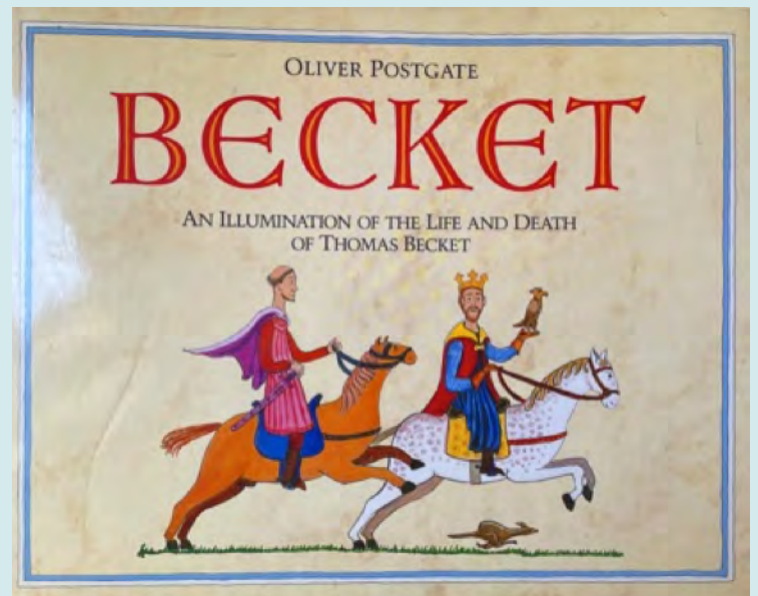
The Bayeux Tapestry is an endless source of inspiration for my mocumentaries. It is both funny and creepy at the same time. Hidden in the detail are so many micro stories which can be put together from the amazing drawings. Oliver Postgate too spotted this, and used the ideas to create a frieze telling the story of Saint Thomas Becket. It's a great little book and at just 50p second hand on Amazon it is a bargain buy. The Tapestry itself is a medieval comic strip and I wanted to maintain that staged appearance, so close ups are limited to the last few shots and titles.

OLIVER POSTGATE

BECKET

AN ILLUMINATION OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOMAS BECKET

2. Oliver Postgate's 'Becket' is another story that has been inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry

In Border Post we tend to want to impress the club with our use of equipment and software, but I want to talk about art and storytelling, so let's get the technical bit out of the way. The hand drawings were made with my light box, scanned and coloured in paint.net. The animated characters were created in Adobe Animate, the editing was done in Adobe After Effects and sound in Adobe Audition. Please don't get the impression that I am a wizzo at software; just switching it on, doing something and saving it is a triumph of the will, and it takes me hours.

So let's step through the interesting bits:
The story was written over several days and made use of my rhyming dictionary. The actual Bell Book and Candle is a Latin curse of excommunication which I felt sure would be used to condemn a young female vampire. Surely even a tyrant such as William the Conqueror would be squeamish about stabbing a young woman through the heart with a stake, or maybe not? The figures are based on those of the Tapestry itself, however the Bishop was drawn in a slightly more angular modern "Flash" style to make him pop from the rest of the characters. The intro is of course just modern sketch style characters, again to separate them stylistically from the rest of the film, although I loved drawing the tourist stereotypes.

A rough storyboard was made up and each frame was edited into the story reel or animatic which included early sound effects and narration. I now had all the timings and notes scribbled onto the storyboard and could be sure the story would work. The story follows the "Hero's Journey" format and focuses on Bishop Bogof, who it turns out is a second cousin twice removed of the Norman Bishop Odo, himself a cousin of the King.

3. The pristine script and storyboard covered in red pen notes

The most complex shot, in which the Bishop confronts the Vampire, was **shot 23f**, which contains three animations. First is the flickering candle which required 3 cells and 3 motion tweens, this was drawn in vector graphics. Second is the Bishop ringing his hand bell with his arm created in hand drawn pngs animated in single cells. I should have used vector graphics and motion tweens but that is part of the learning process. Finally to the vampire; first she transfigures from the "innocent young lady" to the vampire using a morph tween and then transforms across the screen using two motion tweens. Since this is my first attempt it was all a bit messy but ultimately it sort of worked.
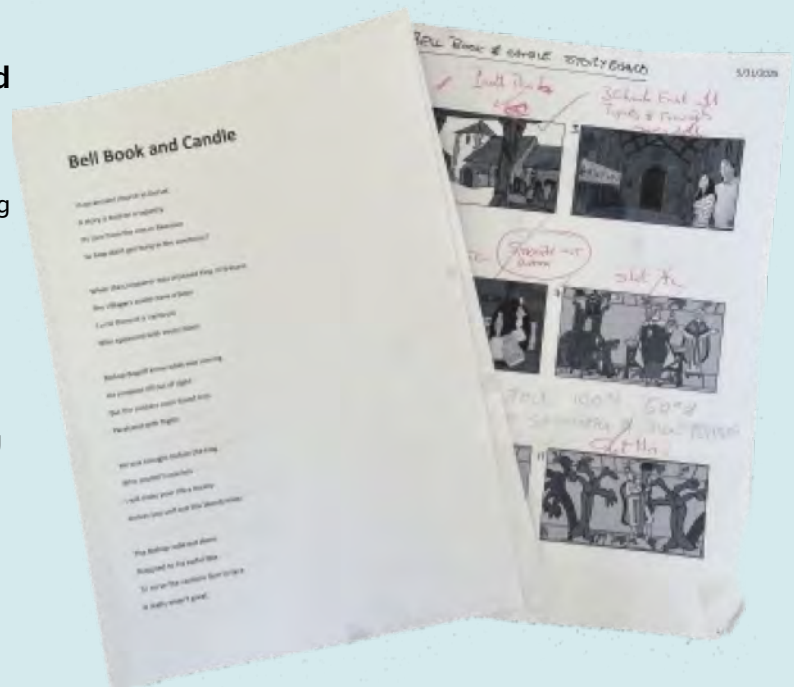
4. Shot 23f was the most complex in the film.

The Vampire had first to transfigure then fly across and into the screen in order to blow out the animated candle while the Bishop rang his hand bell in the background.

5. The Vampire's transfiguration

Earlier in the story at shot 11 Bishop Bogof figures out that the King will delegate the task of killing the Vampire to him. Like most clergymen he is in it for what he can get, so he tries to sneak away. I needed to animate a sneaky walk. The Bishop's robes were difficult to animate so I decided to rotoscope the walk by tracing over a live action shot of me sneaking along the pavement opposite to our house, rather to the dismay of the neighbours. In this shot you can see the considerable number of assets such as the Cathedral cloisters in the foreground and stylised trees in both the foreground and background. These assets and others were reused over and over again.

6. Acting out the sneaky walk to the dismay of the neighbours

7. The final shot of the Bishop sneaking away into the wood with assets in the foreground and background.

8. The Bishop is finally rounded up by the soldiers.
Shot 17 is of Bishop Bogof riding out alone to face the Vampire. Out of interest I had supplied a picture of the Bishop riding his horse to Jim which he then used to create an animated sequence. This method of inbetweening is becoming very popular in the animation industry because it is an extension of the morphing and dynamic inbetweening systems built into most animation packages. It doesn't fully work yet but I am sure it will soon be included in top of the range Adobe After Effects software. For this project it was impressive but still not good enough or even useable but by tracing over it in vectors using the original artwork as a guide, a very good model was obtained using just 4 frames.

8. The Bishop is finally rounded up by the 9. Shot 17 the Bishop rides out to face his fate. This used an AI generated horse and rider as a rotoscope.


9. Shot 17 the Bishop rides out to face his fate. This used an AI generated horse and rider as a rotoscope.

10. The AI horse rotorscoped using vectors in Adobe Animate. Finally the whole thing was stuck together in Adobe After Effects where I started to do a few interesting tweaks, the background was added last because I didn't want it jumping due to any mismatch between shots. The background by the way is just a piece of sackcloth carefully photographed and the illustrated borders are some squiggly lines with traced figures inserted. The sound effects were mostly from Soundsnap for which I have a students license. The music was from the internet and I have an IAC license.
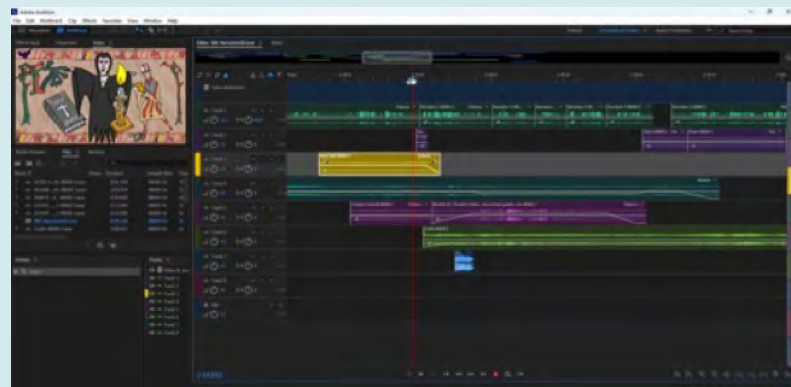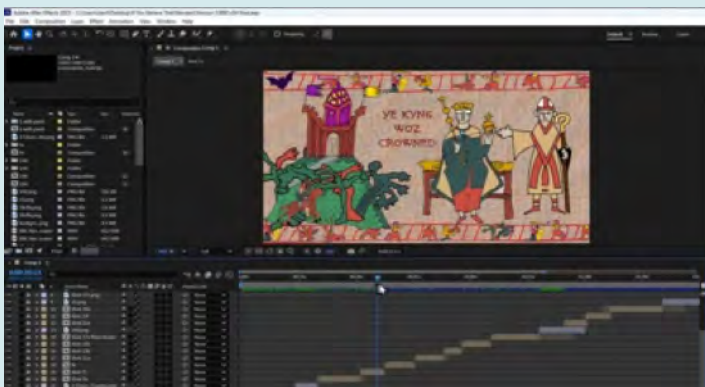
11 Left The final paste up in Adobe After Effects and right 12. the Sound track in Adobe Audition.

Credits and titles included "Olde Englysh" comments to add authenticity. I found a font called "King Harold" which matches that used on the real Bayeux Tapestry. In the credits no one seems to notice that I have type cast Surrey Borders members as "The Peasants" which just shows that no-one except Peter Frost reads the credits. The University of the Creative Arts credit was included to protect my amateur/ student status, although I suspect that few would be in any doubt, and more importantly it gives me discounted entry fees to festivals.
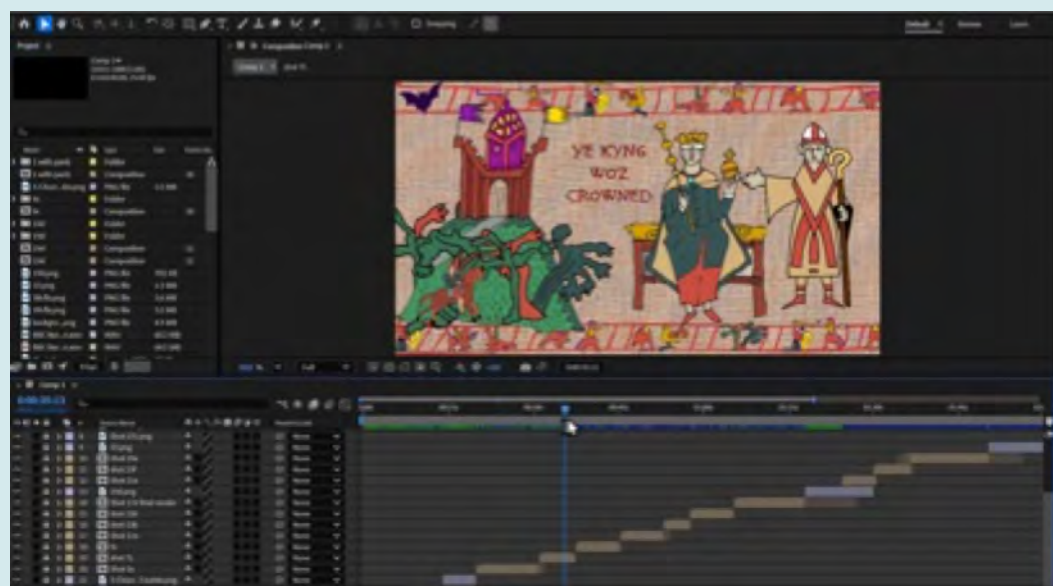
My greatest regret is that **Bell Book and Candle** was intended to be X rated with the Bishop forming a somewhat intimate relationship with the Vampire, but I think Al and Cathy's rather superb photograph at the end (see the header) says it all between the lines in a way that is far more conducive to a pensioners entertainment.

So, finally, we can conclude that Surrey Borders Movie Makers members should live in fear of the very Vampires who could indeed still be living in plain sight within our club. So next time Cathy or Al volunteer to turn out the lights, just. ………………
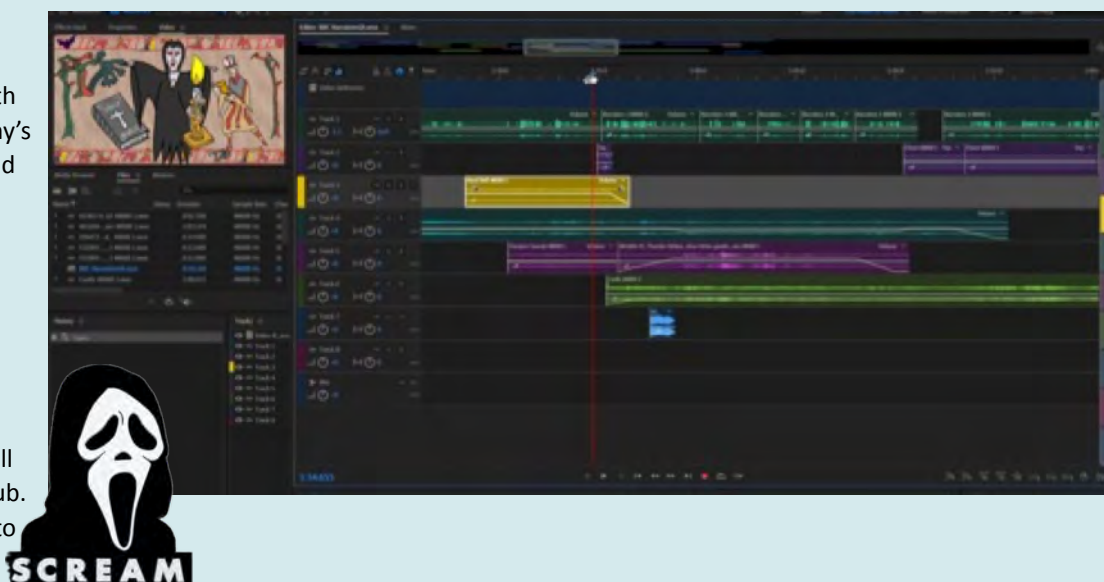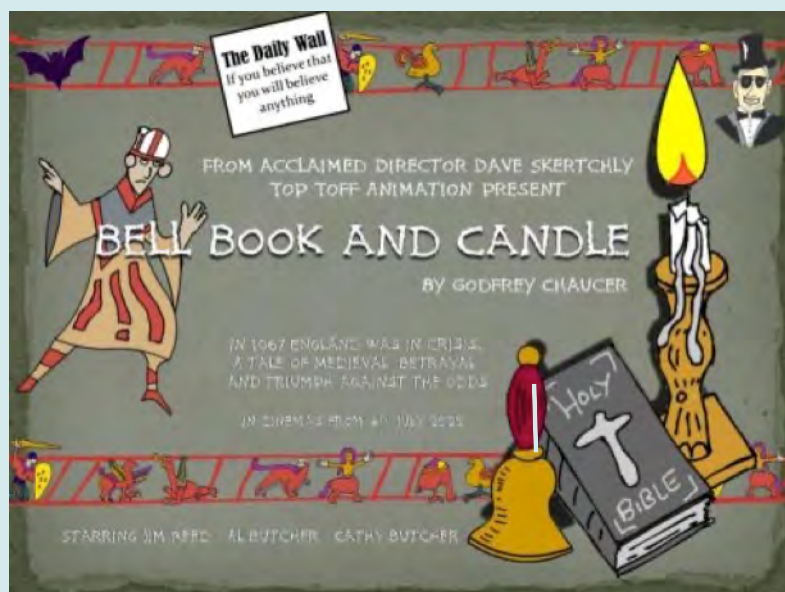

13 As always for my productions there has to be a poster.

14 Find me on

Or my website HERE

Now let's focus on the UK's most important studio. Founded in 1940, **Halas and Batchelor** Cartoons was the largest and most influential animation studio in Western Europe for over 50 years, in which time they made over 2,000 films reflecting the social and style changes of half a century.

John Halas was born in Budapest, Hungary where he studied art, being strongly influenced by the Bauhaus Movement and learned his craft under George Pal.

He launched his own career in 1934, and two years later moved to England where he was asked to set up an animation studio. While advertising for animators he met Joy Batchelor. She joined the studio and two years later she and Halas were married.

While Joy Batchelor took a more reserved role, albeit as an important and talented animator, she had a distinct flare and also took on writing, directing, designing and producing their films. She had an irreverent sense of humour and vivid characterisations that she injected into many of the shorts, counterbalancing John's ambitious drive.

John's talent lay in finding the right people and motivating them to get projects off the ground then giving them free reign. Most British animators of the time passed through the doors of Halas and Batchelor.

Most of the studio's output were short films, including state sponsored propaganda for the forces and public awareness productions, such as the *Charley* series. Charley was a typical British doubting Thomas who was persuaded to see the positive in the end.

They began developing their own films such as *Magic Canvas* (a visual interpretation of music), *The Figurehead*, *The Question* and *Automania*, the first British short film nominated for an Oscar.

John liked experimenting and has a deep felt belief that animation and music are of equal importance, always looking for the next thing. For example *The Owl and the Pussycat* was made in stereoscopic 3D for

Joy Batchelor and John Halas

Automania (1963)

The Question (1967)

Murraymints Commercial (1955) Remember the lyrics: Murray mints, Murray mints, the too good to hurry mints!

Snip and Snap (1960) - animated paper sculptures series for ABC

Charley in New Town (1948)

Magic Canvas

Poet and Painter series (1951) for the Festival of Britain

Charley's Black Magic (1949).

The History of the Cinema (1957)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LedlmMmi1z8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhuS5hLLuCQ

the Festival of Britain which meant producing it twice - once for the left eye and once for the right. A huge amount of work which wasn't repeated but John was pleased that he had shown that it was possible. It is historically significant as it was the first stereoscopic animation in Europe. It's still seen but not in 3D, using just the one viewpoint.

Hamilton the Musical Elephant was a series combining music with the animation and *Ruddigore* took that a step further with an animated opera.

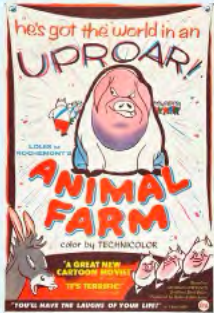But it was Halas and Batchelor that made the first commercial feature length animation in Europe.

The Owl and the Pussycat (1952)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3lq1i67VaE

Hamilton the Musical Elephant (1961)

Ruddigore (1967)

The animals rename their conquest

The studio continued making short films after this, a series of *Foo Foo* cartoons for ABC-TV and another for BBC, *The Tales from Hoffnung* animating Gerard Hoffnung caricatures (1964). The studio was sold to Tyne Tees Television in 1970 and were making Saturday morning cartoons such as the Jackson Five and The Osmonds but they turned away in the 1970s and returned to more experimental work and computer animation.

Foo Foo (series 1960)

Jackson Five

Dilemma (1981) fully digitally produced - about man's use and misuse of his skills

Kraftwerk's Autobahn (1979)

Bringing George Orwell's tale, *Animal Farm*, to the screen in 1954 was no mean feat for Halas & Batchelor whose stylized realism leaned into realms quite different to the homogenised style of Disney, an animated feature film with an adult and political theme.

Embarking on this full length animated movie is to set off on a laborious task needing 250,000 drawings, 1,000 colourful backgrounds and 300,000 man hours.

John and Joy discussing scenes

A model of the farm under discussion

Character designs

Cart horses Boxer and Clover join Benjamin donkey

Tyrannical farmer Jones with method of persuasion

Farmer Jones with angry villagers in the pub

At a time when the British animation industry was still at the early stage, the faith of Louis de Rochmont in England and in Halas & Batchelor was audacious.

It was a major challenge for the studio gearing up for the UK's first full length commercial animated feature (the word 'commercial' is important as it was not the first British feature length animated film, that was *Handling Ships* in 1945 for the Admiralty and the second was *Water for Firefighting* (1948) also made by Halas & Batchelor for the Home Office and Fire Brigade.

By comparison to Disney's light hearted output of the time, it was to dive into a serious subject.

Personalities are symbolic in the portrayal of the pigs' greed and determination under Napoleon, whose representation was likened to Joseph Stalin by the *New York Times*, to take over the farm and rule over the other animals. The pig's pomposity and ponderous features caricature the sinister authoritarianism of his character.

However, the successful farmyard revolution by the resident animals goes horribly wrong when the victors create a new tyranny of dictatorship among themselves.

Use this link to watch the

FULL MOVIE:
https://archive.org/details/animalfarm1954_20190809

Old Major holds court

Left: Fire cel
Below: Fire sequence from the film

Napoleon in charge

The Latest Ai for Film Making.

Last year, Ai rocked the world by being able to produce artificial images that were, by the standards of those days, incredibly realistic. That is of course provided we weren't too fussed about how many fingers there were on each persons hand, or the reality of other details in the image! Then the later release that year of image generator Flux1.0 certainly raised the quality bar to new heights.

This year, the rate of change and improvements has been equally dramatic.

I spoke recently at the club about the challenge of coherence I'd experienced when making 'More Tea Vicar' back in the early months of 2025. Trying to retain image coherence was almost impossible.

Perhaps no surprise then that the biggest shift in Ai this year is coherence.

Those early Ai tools could generate some accurate single shots, but keeping characters, faces, and styles consistent across a whole sequence was almost impossible.

That's changing. New generation models are now producing multi-shot clips where the same character carries through different angles and expressions, edging us ever closer to real film making. These images were generated using Dall.e 3 and Flux Context.

The big question now isn't **"Can Ai make videos?"** – it's **"How are we actually going to use it?"** Will clubs like ours lean on Ai for scriptwriting, storyboarding, filler shots, whole scenes, music, dialogue… or maybe something else entirely? The technology is already here – the real challenge is deciding how we want to use it. And that means taking the time to separate the truly useful from the just "nice to have."

At our August meeting, Mike raised a really important point: exploring these tools takes time, energy, and sometimes even a little money. It's a lot for one person to take on alone.
So here's the idea: if anyone in the club is interested in researching, experimenting, and sharing what they discover about Ai, let's do it together. Drop me a line at **jim@surreyborder.org.uk** and we can get the ball rolling.

Jim Reed

Mastering the Art of Filmmaking on your Smart Phone with Blackmagic Camera Software!

By Philip Morley

My recent holiday in France came in 2 parts.

Part One – Our first week with temperatures of 40c + this made my iPhone really struggle when filming in ProRes HQ at 4K. Being a firm believer in **"most problems have a solution"** I found a small plastic bag full of ice did the trick to overcome the heating issue.

Part Two – During the following week, with some massive thunderstorms, it gave me some time to further investigate some of the finer points of smart Phone filming using the Blackmagic App.

In trying to make my phone inconspicuous, I left behind my big rig with its 2 TB hard drive in the handle and utilised the 128 GB of internal memory with just a magnetic handle and a variable ND filter.

Reducing my Codec to ProRes LT and filming in 1080p gave me 10 second clips of 100mb, well down on the 900 MB for the same clip using ProResHQ at 4K.!!

This gave rise to a new problem. How to transfer the clips of 50 GB+ to my Apple laptop computer?. The problem was that, with any more than a few clips being transferred by Air Drop (Quick Share on Android) the phone timed out. This proved more difficult to overcome.

My first thought was to attach the phone to the laptop via USB. This then enabled me to see the iPhone on my desk top. I found the Blackmagic media folder and double clicked on it only to find it did't open. Some stange quirk with Apple no doubt. So this meant only all the content could be downloaded and not selected clips. Not much good when you have 100 GB of clips and just want a couple of individual ones .
Now I understood why it pays to have a bolt on hard drive.

But wait. I found a solution. Every iPhone has an App called Image Capture. I am not sure if the Android phones have such an App.

So the work around is:

1.   Attach your phone to the laptop/computer/iPad via USB.
2.   Launch the Image Capture App
3.   Open the Blackmagic App and go to the Media section to view your clips. Use the select clips button to select the clips you want to download.
4.   Click the upload button and select 'Save' (however many you have selected) and they will immediately appear in the Image Capture App on your computer.
5.   Open Image Capture and your clips will be visable.
6.   Create a folder in your Movies section for the download and "import the clips you have selected. A 1 GB clip takes just 30 seconds to download. **JOB DONE!**

For those of you who were not able to make my presentation in August, the movies covering the Blackmagic Camera App's general operation, multi cam and pulling focus over time are available by clicking on the links below.

Click **HERE** for the **interface** review

Click **HERE** for the **Multi Cam** review

Click **HERE** for the **Pull Focus** over time review.

Rita's Rib Ticklers

HOW WE PLAYED "ONLINE"

BEFORE THE INTERNET!

PULLED PORK FARM

Tomorrow is National grey haired grumpy old Woman day

And I expect recognition!

This is How My Frends and I Played Back In The Day

Not One Of Us Grew Up And Killed Anyone

That's all 40 Sheep

What? We should only have 37!?

I know, I rounded them up.

I'M GOING TO THE TABLE TO BEG - CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?

I met my wife at a singles night. I was surprised because I thought she was at home with the kids.

"The older I get, the better I used to be."
Lee Trevino

Editor's Note

Having seen Peter Frost's August edition of Border Post, I realise how far I have to go to even stand a chance of my editions reaching such heady heights! Every page reconfigured and reshuffled. Only the mice on Rita's Rib Ticklers survived. All very humbling. So much so that I am expecting a request at any moment to relinquish my role to let others as good as Peter take over.!!

Not wishing to upstage Peter at all, but this edition was prepared in heat of 40+C in the depths of France where little english is spoken and certainly no editorial advice is available. My mode of transport was by car and not by submarine as was so eloquently decribed on Peter's header.

Anyway, thanks Peter for stepping in with a show stopping edition.

A very warm welcome to John Hawthorn as our new Movie Competition Coordinator. We are sure there will be many new exciting projects future competitions under his guidance.

Thanks to Brian for literally holding the fort while Philip was away. Philip and Brian

COPY DEADLINE! October 2025 issue will be 14th of September so keep it coming. Late copy will be carried over to the next month. Thank you for your co-operation - *Eds*!

Come and see what we do!

See what other movie makers are up to and you may get 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:

www.facebook.com/SurreyBorderMovieMakers/timeline

Meetings are held at St Joan's Centre, 19 Tilford Road, Farnham GU9 8DJ, on the first Friday of the month, starting at 8.00 pm and finishing at 10.00 pm. If you are interested then email: secretary@surreyborder.org.uk

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

Surrey Border movie makers

Next Meeting

September 5th July – Documentary competition

Future Meetings

3rd Oct: David Fairhead will show his new documentary 'The Long Journey Home'.

7th Nov: At the St Joan's Centre. Invited clubs will attend via Zoom.

5thDec: Club Competition.

7th Dec: Christmas lunch - location to be advised.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

HOW TO UPLOAD YOUR FILMS

For future reference, all videos for club showing should now be uploaded via the website.

Simply click on 'Competitions', then 'Members Video Uploads', and then after you have read the simple instructions, click on 'Go to the online upload page'.

For even easier access, this is a direct link to the 'online upload page

HERE

Select the relevant upload choice.

Your Club Contacts

	Name:	Email:
Chairman	Mike Sanders	chairman@surreyborder.org.uk
Vice Chairman	Philip Morley	
Hon. Secretary	Rita Wheeler	secretary@surreyborder.org.uk
Hon. Treasurer	Gillian Gatland	
Webmaster Slack & The Brain	Jim Reed	
Competition Officer	John Hawthorne	
Movie Projects Co-ordinator.	TBA	
Public Relations Officer	Kathy Butcher	
Editor - Border Post	Philip Morley & Brian O'Connell	
Social Events	Rita Wheeler and Gillian Gatland	

Your contributions for inclusion will be appreciated together with photographs if possible. Please send them to The Editor Border Post for the next issue: pffilms1@mac.com