Scanlines Quickie

Where art and technology meet

HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2017

Well, yes, a jolly Happy New Year to all— and it can be!!

Last year has been and gone and pretty eventful it was for the club. What did we achieve? Well, a worthwhile movie, *Edith's Choice*, came out of a lot of work by Col and Joy (not to mention a contribution by many members) and a documentary on the Rural Fire Brigade by Brian, Stewart and Don made interesting viewing. Just shows what could be done if the Brigade hierarchy allowed us to call the shots.

Over the past few months, not-so-subtle hints have been dropped about big things ahead for this new year. Over the Christmas break, your committee has not slept. Sometimes it was reindeer on the roof, but mostly it was *planning!* So now I have the honour of the great unveiling. The club is going to change direction, just a little. It is going to be a club where *Art and technology meet*. It's on the heading! But why? Because the club had become thoroughly entrenched in a technology base. This began in the early nineties, if not before, when video began to replace film as our medium of choice. Don't worry, we are not the only ones— the professional cinematography world has been through ten years of upheaval and denial as the same happened to them. Well known names dropped from the scene, unable to cope with digital. New people appeared on the scene (Digital Imaging Technicians) who now tell the cinematographers when the picture is right. Now, they are faced with the rise of CGI (Computer Generated Imagery), which puts another nail in their box.

In our case (and the "amateur" world generally), we became stuck in a sort of equipment-worship. Each new camera was greeted with acclaim and the next awaited with bated breath. It still goes on. Only one trouble— cameras and equipment don't make movies! People make movies.

So, our big change is more of a deep breath. We have equipment of a quality we never imagined, at prices undreamed of. So, what are we going to do with it? We intend to introduce a little *art* into the process. That is, we want the good equipment to make good movies. And how do we do this? By making them. Last year was a good example of things to come. Anyone actually interested in making movies should enjoy this year! So, let's begin.

Film Noir

So, what do you know about *Film Noir*? A lot—good. A little— OK. Nothing at all— tut-tut! Just kidding! Film Noir (noir being French for *black*, or even, at a stretch, *dark*) was one of the few, or perhaps only, genuinely American styles of movie making, even perhaps, a *genre*. Strangely, the Americans were slow to recognise this and the term was coined by a group of French critics almost after the event. This style of movie was best shot on monochrome, high-contrast film and eventually faded from favour. Mostly.

A Dictionary definition:

Noir: (Fr) Black / Film Noir -   a style or genre of cinematographic film marked by a mood of pessimism, fatalism, and menace. The term was originally applied (by a group of French critics) to American thriller or detective films made in the period 1944–54 and to the work of directors such as Orson Welles, Fritz Lang, and Billy Wilder.

It will be a mystery no more!

Because on the meeting of January 19, an attempt will be made to shoot a *Noir* scene. I have been privy to the rehearsals and preparations of this event. And to the genuine blood, sweat and tears that a group of members has put and is putting into this evening. I know we are just getting over holiday time, but we wanted to start the year with a bang. And this event will have plenty of bang! The evening will run like this:

1.   The "team" will arrive early to set up to allow a sharp **7.30** start.

2.   Ms Ali Taylor, a lecturer from Bond University, will give a short, but very informative, talk on the subject. *Don't miss this!!*

3.   A team of members will attempt to shoot about a five minute scene in the noir style, which will be taken away and edited, to be shown a month later with information on what went right and wrong with the video, the lighting and the sound. Those who take part in this will, of course, learn the most and our thanks go out to those members who have volunteered to assist. We will, of course, explain as best we can what we are doing and why. So, paying attention will result in the best outcome.

The organiser of this exercise has lined up a couple of very suitable actors, who are busily learning their lines. At the end of this two month process, we should all feel confident that we are able to shoot a noir scene and have it turn out as we plan. Something few other people can do.

So, come one, come all. Join with the rest of the club as we move forward to where we stalled many years ago. You will find it's interesting, fun, informative and teaches skills you never knew you had. Does this mean we will ignore technology in the future? Of course not. It will simply restore a balance that had slipped.

The techniques you will learn are applicable to whatever you shoot, from travel movies to high drama. You will gain confidence in using your camera and achieve results you never expected — if you make a little effort.

And please don't forget

Subscriptions for 2017 came due at the end of December. Many thanks to those who paid early and a gentle reminder to those who have not had the chance, yet.

That's $45 single and $55 family. Single membership does *not* mean your better half can't come to meetings. Full membership is needed if she/he is an active movie maker to cover insurance, etc.

"DARKNESS VISIBLE"

Just about everything seems to be labelled film noir these days. If it's got a detective and a voiceover, it's noir. If we're in a city at night, it's noir, especially if it's raining. But when should and shouldn't something be labelled film noir? And is there an ultimate noir?

1. Assemble the Elements

INVESTIGATOR
(a man of relative integrity)
Examples: Sam Spade,
Philip Marlowe,
Jeff Bailey

CRIMINAL
(usually a murderer)
Examples: Walter Neff,
Kasper Gutman,
Eddie Mars

WOMAN 1
(bad, beautiful)
Examples: Bridgid
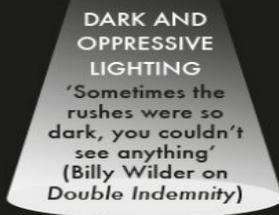O'Shaughnessy,
Kitty Collins,
Kathie Moffat

WOMAN 2
(good, bland)
Examples: Ann Grayle,
Ann Miller,
Katie Bannion

**EUROPEAN
EMIGRÉ DIRECTOR**
Examples: Fritz Lang,
Billy Wilder,
Robert Siodmak

**STOLEN MONEY
OR VALUABLES**
Examples: the
Maltese falcon,
the jade necklace,
a bank robbery

**DARK AND
OPPRESSIVE
LIGHTING**
'Sometimes the
rushes were so
dark, you couldn't
see anything'
(Billy Wilder on
Double Indemnity)

**SCRIPT BASED
ON AMERICAN
PULP FICTION**
Examples:
*The Maltese Falcon,
Double Indemnity,
The Big Sleep*

**HEAVY SMOKING,
HEAVY DRINKING
OR BOTH**
Colonel Sternwood:
'How do you like
your brandy, sir?'
Marlowe: 'In a glass'
(from *The Big Sleep*)

**OBSESSION
WITH THE PAST**
(copious flashbacks)
Examples: *Double Indemnity,
Detour, Murder My Sweet*
& numerous others
are all told in flashback

**COMPLEX AND/OR
FAR-FETCHED PLOT**
'The script was very
hard to follow and
very involved'
(Jacques Tourneur
on *Out of the Past*)
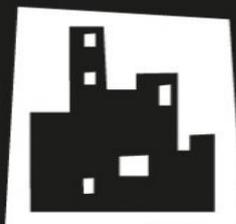
URBAN LOCATION
Examples: Los Angeles,
San Francisco, 'Kenport'

BLEAK VIEW OF HUMANITY
'You said the world's bad.
We can't run away from the
badness. And you're right
there. ... We must deal with
the badness, make terms.'
(from *The Lady from Shanghai*)