

Focus Magazine

The monthly publication of the Institute of Videography

Issue 198 - July 2011 - £3.50



Feature Creature

Mark Brindle builds a feature film camera rig around Panasonic's AF101

also this
month



The 2011 IOV Awards is open for entries

By Kevin Cook



3D Facilitator - a review of Cineform Neo 3D

By Ian Sandall



Tech Talk - Habbycam and the Cinevate Atlas Slider

By Kevin Cook



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ProVideo... Why bother?

Every year I ask myself this question. What with all the stress, hard work, long hours and lack of sleep.... why is it that I long for the next one as soon as the IOV's show is over each year? Either I'm bonkers or there's something really special about this event which turns all the negatives into insignificant inconveniences. Well - its only a few months away folks so its time to start planning your appearance. The registration for ProVideo 2011 is now officially open - www.iov.com/provideo

Everyone involved in pro-video should experience this event at least once in their lives - and I'm not just talking about popping along to the trade show for a couple of hours. To get the proper ProVideo-fix you'll need to take in the whole experience - the exhibition, a few seminars, the awards night, maybe some late-night networking coupled with slightly hazy daytime rendezvous over an orange juice or maybe a Red Bull. If you get to the end of ProVideo and don't suffer from fatigue then you really haven't tried hard enough have you?!

By the time you head off home from ProVideo your head should be abuzz with new business and creative concepts as well as technical processes. These are not only picked up in the seminar and presentation theatres. You can also hear these ideas and golden nuggets being shared throughout the event... at the exhibition stands, in the formal central relaxation area, in the halls and corridors - in fact anywhere where two

The Cook Retort



videographers make the effort to say, "hello". Whilst I'm continually amazed at the sharing nature of members in the IOV's online forums, its not until you come to an event like ProVideo that you realise the importance and true worth of face-to-face networking and how life-long business relationships are formed through a general acceptance that, for us to survive and prosper, the best policy is to team-up and share information, skills and resources. This is the very foundation of the IOV and the core to its success and the success of its members.

By the time I make that final PA announcement at 4pm at the Ricoh on 20th October, "Ladies and gentlemen - ProVideo 2011 is now closed" you'll be itching to get back home and put some of the ideas you have picked up into practice. You'll need to remember to drop a line to those new friends that you've met over the past couple of days and start the ball rolling on that joint venture you discussed at the bar. You'll also be gagging to rip open the boxes containing the new toys that you bought at never-to-be-repeated prices. And, if you are like the hundreds of other regular attendees at ProVideo - you'll be suffering from the usual dark thought that you've got a year to wait until ProVideo 2012 comes around.

So unless you are into self-denial - get online and register today. ■

Kevin Cook

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IOV Awards 2011 NOW OPEN!

The IOV is pleased to announce that the 2011 IOV Awards is now officially open for entries - with the Awards Ceremony taking place in the Sky Creations Lounge at the Ricoh Arena on 19th October.

The list of categories will remain the same as last year...

Best Corporate Video
Best Wedding Day Film
Best Documentary
Best Film
Best Music Video
Best Open

In addition to the six main categories, the IOV will also award a single winner as 'Best Overall Production' which will be drawn from the above categories - and this year will be awarded in memory of former Executive Member, Derek Latimer.

One of the major changes to the rules of entry introduced last year is that all showreels

are to be placed in the Corporate Category to reflect the fact that they are essentially promotional films for the production company themselves. Previously these have been placed in the Open Category - which has caused confusion for both judges and entrants.

Entry forms are now available from www.iov.com/awards, which includes a description of each category and the qualities which the judges are looking for. Members must read the rules very carefully - and ensure the production was completed between 31st July 2010 and the closing date of 1st August 2011.

Following on from the success of the 2010 awards, the format for the awards ceremony will remain the same - with a formal sit-down banquet followed by the awards presentations and live music entertainment to follow within our own private function area.

Once the formalities and celebrations have finished, those that enjoy a really late night can then move on to the casino, located on the lower floor of the Ricoh, which stays open until 5am! ■

Kevin Cook
Executive Administrator
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All-embracing sessions at ProVideo 2011

With the wedding industry feeling the greatest squeeze at present, we have selected a very broad spectrum of keynote presentations for ProVideo this year - ranging from general talks on developing your brand, to presentation on the power of visual corporate communications - right through to an introduction into wildlife filmmaking.

Whilst weddings are still very much on the agenda - ProVideo

2011 is set to be our most "inclusive" event to date - and should appeal to every sector within the pro-video marketplace.

In addition to the presentations taking place within the Jaguar Suite, there will also be open theatres within the exhibition itself - some devised and delivered by our exhibitors and others organised by the IOV.

Whilst all sessions and

presentations will be free for both members and non-members alike (tickets allocated on the day on a first-come, first-served basis) due to

demand from delegates last year we will also introduce an optional pre-booking service for those who have a long distance to travel and who are unable to be at the event for when the doors first open. IOV members will have the option to pay £10 per session (non-members £20) to reserve their places.

The list of seminars and presentations will be published online in the coming weeks (www.iov.com/provideo) - along with the facility to pre-book seats for those that want to. We do still have a couple of slots available in our keynote theatres - and will also welcome interest from companies wishing to sponsor slots in our exhibition floor theatres. ■

Kevin Cook
Executive Administrator
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Assessment Results - June 2011

The assessment panel met on 3 June 2011 when the following awards were made:

Fellowship

John De Rienzo F.Inst.V.
(Hanworth, Middlesex)

Master Membership

Robert Goldsmith M.M.Inst.V.
(Washington, West Sussex)

Dave Marris M.M.Inst.V.
(Haxby, York)

For the first time ever I am proud to say that we had a 100% pass rate! Okay, we only had three applicants this time but it was still an achievement. Well done to all!

With wedding season well under way now the panel is bracing itself for the September assessment meeting when we usually get a flood of wedding films to assess. The only word of warning I will say to those thinking of sending in work is - please make sure you read, understand and fully comply with all the criteria. If your piece of work is not suitable as it stands, then go back to the original rushes and tweak it until it is. Do not leave something in purely because it is what your original client asked for; it may not be something the panel has asked for!

I was also reminded the other day of how long the Associate Membership exam has been running now, and it has prompted me to remind you about the time limit between passing the exam and sending in work for assessment. Remember you have up to two years from the date you pass your Associate Membership exam to get work to the assessment panel. After that, although you will remain an Associate Member as long as you stay in the IOV, you have to pass the exam again in order to submit work.

The final cut-off date for the next assessment is Wednesday 31 August 2011. Your application must arrive on or before that date to be included in the September 2011 session. ■

Chris Waterlow F.Inst.V.
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Light Wrapper

The original PanAura 5 was labelled "The portable window" and is renowned for its beautiful light character - and Dedolight is now pleased to announce its big brother the PanAura 7.

The PanAura system of lighting instruments are large surface area soft lights that produce a beautiful wrap around light from extremely thin lightweight fixtures. This allows these systems to be used with convenience and speed - and now with the introduction of the 7' version twice the output and size.

The fixture includes two individually switchable, dimmable lamps that can be boosted from 400W to 575W daylight or alternatively with tungsten balanced discharge lamps, this allows a dimming range from 300W to 1150W without significant colour shift with both lamp types. The fixture is also available as a traditional 2Kw tungsten source or also as a 4kw tungsten source with high temperature octodome fabric.

The 7 foot wide soft box is available with three different diffusers and a 40 ° grid is only 60cm deep, which provides



excellent space saving solutions compared to similar sized soft lights currently available. This allows the use of this big window sized soft light in confined spaces and on location.

This is following the Dedolight philosophy of being economical, interchangeable, compact and as lightweight as possible, without any loss in quality.

The PanAura7 is powered from two standard DEB400DT electronic ballasts, which additionally can be mounted to the lighting stand by ballast holders to provide best possible stability without using additional sand bags.

These systems are available for rental and sale as either daylight (HMI) kits or traditional tungsten kits – or a combination of both. The Dedolight PanAura7 also won the CINEC AWARD in September 2010.

For further details contact Cirro Lite direct - see the 'Lighting' section of the Trade Directory on page 13.



ASSOCIATE MEMBER



INSTITUTE OF VIDEOGRAPHY

Newly-accredited Associate Members

The following have passed their Associate Member exam and are now able to use the IOV logo in their marketing material. They have also been set up with a web page which must be linked to when the IOV logo is placed on their website. Full details of the benefits of Associate Membership can be found at www.iov.com/join

Peter Cox A.M.Inst.V.	Georgeham, Devon
Clive Foster A.M.Inst.V.	Crowthorne, Berkshire
Paul Warsaw A.M.Inst.V.	Spital, Wirral

Please note: Newly accredited Associate Members are published in Focus each month and will be accurate at time of publication.

Happy Days - 10% OFF New AKM CDs

AKM Music, the UK's number one producer of Royalty Free Music have announced the release of 2 brand new CDs to their library.

AK133 Happy Days is a wonderfully quirky and upbeat selection of tracks that would fit a promo or any joyful happy event.

Uplifting melodies and grooves to add a real feel-good factor into your productions. Positive and light and will bring a smile to your face and a spring in your step. Each of the main themes will have it's own short edit and sting.

AK134 Orchestral Themes Impact is a glorious selection of tracks that brings the hits of Hans Zimmer to mind with his epic score to Pirates of the Caribbean influencing this collection. Huge rich orchestral

arrangements and perfect for creating a cinematic effect to your next production. Add a bit of cinematic adventure to your next project. You can preview and purchase these new CDs and all AKM's products at

www.akmmusic.co.uk. Use this promo code SWPPDIS1 online and get 10% off these or any CDs in the AKM library.

AKM Music have also confirmed they will be exhibiting at the IOV's ProVideo 2011 show and the new media show BVE North in Manchester.



For further details contact AKM Music direct - see the 'Copyright Free & Commissioned Music' section of the Trade Directory on page 12.

SD cards - the new speed freak

Sonnet Technologies and Panasonic have announced products based on a new card technology which enables production teams to transfer files far more quickly from camera to edit or archive. While a mature product such as a class 10 SDHC card can record and transfer files up-to 30 MB/s, UHS-I technology makes the leap to speeds in excess of 90 MB/s.

Panasonic's new SDHC UHS-I memory cards are designed with the professional user in mind, combining high speed of operation with reliability and durability. The cards incorporate a controller to protect data from sudden power failure, a refresh function to extend the archival life by over 10 times, and smart data writing to minimize defects risk caused by intensive writing. They are also equipped with "Proof 5" to withstand severe conditions (anti-water, shock, magnet, X-ray, temperature-proof -25oC to 85oC). The new 8GB, 16GB and 32GB versions will be available from the distributor, Holdan, from the end of June 2011.

Panasonic have also announced a USB 3.0 Reader/Writer. The reader gives high speed data transfer performance from UHS-I compliant cards into

workstations. The BN-SDCMAB has two card slots, for full size SD and microSD cards. The new BN-SDCMAB will also be available end of June 2011.

In a parallel announcement, Sonnet Technologies have launched the SDXC UHS-I Pro Reader/Writer ExpressCard®/34, which fits into a slot-equipped MacBook® Pro or Windows® notebook computer on location or in the studio.

The ability to transfer data from the fastest professional SD media at speeds above 90 MB/s makes for a far more convenient and efficient workflow. Using the 2.5 Gb/s PCI Express® interface incorporated into ExpressCard slots, the device offers superior performance superior to adapters that depend a USB 2.0 interface. The adapter is available from Holdan.

Jill Keane, product specialist with Holdan, welcomed the new technology: "Whether crews are using one or multiple cameras, a fast turn-around from production to post is essential. UHS-I will make a real difference - the speed increases are very impressive indeed."

For further details contact Holdan direct - see the 'Equipment Dealers' section of the Trade Directory on page 13.



Canon's latest range of professional video cameras. **Set your own standard.**

Canon's XF series of camcorders utilizes an MPEG-2 recording codec with 4:2:2 colour sampling and a data rate of up to 50Mbps, capturing Full HD footage in stunning detail.

The XF305 & XF300 combine a Canon L-series lens and 3 Full HD Canon CMOS sensors for broadcast-quality HD video stored on Compact Flash memory cards.

The XF105 & XF100 are compact, powerful and packed with features such as professional audio, 10x zoom Canon HD Video Lens and infrared recording, for exceptional versatility.

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XA10



XF105 & XF100



XF305 & XF300

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DSLR? - Get it in there!

For the busy photographer on the go, Petrol Bags, a Vitec Group brand, now has the ultimate travel solution—the new DigiSuite DSLR Camera Case.

The front lid of this semi-hard suitcase-style carrier unzips quickly to reveal a central compartment contoured to comfortably fit up to two DSLR cameras with lenses attached. Detachable internal dividers help secure contents and create pockets for storing a mattebox, camera plate, follow focus,

camera light, viewfinder, cables, etc. With the dividers removed, the DigiSuite can serve as a regular

suitcase. On the lid's interior, a padded pouch can hold a personal computer with up to a 17" screen. Contents are surrounded and cushioned by soft padded red fabric.

Twin brackets on the bottom of the DigiSuite allow for quick connection of Petrol's Snaplock wheel and trolley system (PA1001). The exterior features a plastic exchangeable logo frame for personal branding. Additional features include cold-molded laminate panels for extra protection, auxiliary zippered storage pouches for personal accessories, exterior front pocket, top and side carrying handles, and dual-directional easy glide zippers. Construction is of black 900D and ballistic nylon fabrics.

The DigiSuite DSLR Camera Case (PD610) will be available in July. List price is 290 Euro (246 GBP).

For further information on the DigiSuite DSLR Camera Case or other Petrol products, please go to www.petrolbags.com



Edius gets the PluralEyes treatment

Singular Software, developer of workflow automation applications for digital media, is pleased to announce that PluralEyes has added Grass Valley's EDIUS to its list of supported non-linear editing applications.

PluralEyes offers critical workflow automation tools for analyzing media content and synchronizing audio and video clips. The new PluralEyes release for EDIUS provides an array of features for managing multi-camera, multi-take, and dual-system audio productions for seamless integration into existing EDIUS workflows.

"We had an overwhelming response from the Grass Valley community to add EDIUS to our list of compatible hosts," says Bruce Sharpe, CEO of Singular Software. "PluralEyes speeds up the entire synchronization process with frame accuracy, regardless of the intricacy of the project or its camera and or audio quality. We look forward to helping EDIUS users get home early with the time-saving capabilities of our award-winning synchronization tool."

The PluralEyes application dramatically accelerates the

workflow for multi-camera, multi-take and dual-system audio productions. By analyzing audio information, PluralEyes synchronizes audio and video clips automatically, without the need for timecode, clappers or other special preparation.

PluralEyes can be used for a wide range of projects, from weddings and live events to documentaries, commercials, indie films and more. Director and cinematographer Rob Castiglione (<http://www.robcastiglione.com>) frequently utilizes PluralEyes for his dual-system shoots. Rob comments, "...Everything is always synced up perfectly on every take. PluralEyes is a genuine solution that liberates filmmakers from worrying about the technical stuff. It is one of the best pieces of software that I have ever purchased."

PluralEyes for EDIUS is available to purchase at an introductory price of \$119 USD until July 15, 2011 via the Singular Software website. The regular price is \$149 USD.

For further information please go to www.singularsoftware.com

Litepanels supports film students

In Kuria Constituency, a region of Kenya defined by its rural character, Kenyan film student Beryl Magoko made her final graduation film project about the circumcision of girls. She used the compact Micro LED light from Litepanels, a Vitec Group brand, for interviews with protagonists.

documentary concerning the difficult issue of female circumcision, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) in Kenyan villages, is her final project. She filmed on an open field during the rite of circumcision, at which approximately 100 girls were circumcised within four hours. In addition, she interviewed women and girls affected by circumcision as well as doctors and church representatives, and accompanied volunteers during awareness campaigns at schools.

Together with Joseph Kitsha, an assistant from the department, Beryl Magoko made her way from Kampala to Kuria Constituency. Even today, FGM still takes place there. The circumcision rites have been a tradition for centuries in Kenya and are solidly ingrained in the mentality of the ordinary rural population. The fear shared by the victims and their parents and the resulting scepticism regarding an

anti-circumcision film made the small team's work considerably more difficult.

In spite of this, the student stood behind her project with absolute conviction and did not allow herself to be intimidated. "One single success outweighed a hundred defeats", Beryl Magoko points out. She herself is from Kuria Constituency and personally knows many of the girls and women she interviewed. "This created a valuable foundation of trust, which increases the authenticity of the film enormously."

Although the graduates did not have access to high budgets for their graduation films, the university was able to provide professional equipment thanks to the generous material donations of different manufacturers and private people. This is how Litepanels camera lights have become an inherent part of the equipment at Kampala University. Beryl Magoko learned to appreciate the extremely low weight of the small, handy camera light by Litepanels and enthusiastically explains: "It proved to be very advantageous for us that the battery-operated light does not require an external cable and consequently can be used everywhere and for several hours."

With only four AA-batteries, the LED camera light can be powered for an hour and a half. With lithium ion batteries, the Micro delivers seven to eight hours of professional lighting.

"The camera light can also be mounted and detached quickly and easily," adds the student and mentions a further advantage of using the Micro: The light generates hardly any heat and thus not only saves energy but also prevents the user from burning his/her hands on it. Beryl Magoko mostly filmed the conversations in the womens' or girls' kitchens or the living rooms and, with the flicker-free and completely dimmable light, placed them in the scene, so that a comfortable lighting situation resulted for the interviews about the traumatic experiences.

"For me as a student, it is a great privilege to be able to work with professional film equipment. This not only significantly increases the motivation while working, but it is also a lot more fun," says Beryl Magoko summing up her work.

A trailer documenting the shooting of Beryl Magoko's film can be seen on www.youtube.com/kufilmclass.

For more information visit www.litepanels.com



With its practical battery operation and light weight, the camera light proved to be the perfect companion for this extraordinary project in the middle of the African Veld. Beryl Magoko studies filmmaking in Uganda at the Kampala University's Film-TV-Video Department, which was founded in 2009. "Sophia's Big Day", her

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■ KIT FOR PANASONIC AG-3DA1



■ KIT FOR PANASONIC AG-AF101

Area IOV News

North & West Yorkshire

By Roger Staniland

Our previous area meeting in March which was held at the studios of Feature Media Limited owned and run by IOV local Members Ian Jackson and Julie Tumilly and their team.

14 members were entertained to an Introduction to Feature Media and Augmented Reality, showing some augmented reality clips from the YouTube internet site, which are some of the best examples from around the world. Augmented reality (AR) is a term for a live direct or an indirect view of a physical, real-world environment whose elements are augmented by computer-generated sensory input, such as sound or graphics. There followed some details of the technology behind it and then on how Feature



Media built a 3D logo in Cinema 4D and put an augmented reality marker on a business card.

A demonstration of their AR application followed and members were invited to have a go. The presentation concluded with a video, Feature Media had made of the feedback they got when they used their AR project at the Yorkshire Mafia exhibition in March (see here www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIDBo9nqo7I). Many thanks must go to Ian and his team at Feature Media Limited for an extremely informative evening.

Our May meeting held at the Lord Darcy, Alwoodley was attended by 17 members and guests. The evening's presentation was titled "Live Video Streaming and how to do it on a lower end budget" by Martin Kay of Zen Computer Services.

Martin started Zen in the 1980 while working at the Granada Manchester Studios. This year Martin has been one of the

trainers at the IOV VideoSkills workshops.

Zen are launching a new back-end service to support live web streaming for smaller-scale events, product launches, training sessions, and suchlike. The service is aimed at video production companies and videographers with little or no prior experience of web streaming who have been asked to provide such a service as an add-on to existing video coverage. At its simplest level, ZEN will provide the encoding equipment and operator, set up a web-page with customer-branded player and optional live chat window, and provides quality-control monitoring of the stream during transmission.

Many thanks must go to Martin Kay from travelling to Leeds to present this extremely informative subject to a very attentive audience. Further details are available from www.zenvideo.co.uk. ■

West London, Middlesex & Herts.

By Roger Marshall

Guy Thatcher of Hirecamera was our guest presenter for the evening. He brought with him an array of equipment, lenses and cameras, giving members a wide view of the latest trends in the DSLR, and HD video markets.

He first dealt with the changes which had occurred over the year since he had last made a presentation to the group. He focused on various adaptors for the Canon and Nikon lenses, stating that the reason for the lack of manual adjustments on some of the Canon lenses was the placement of the motor inside of the lens, while Nikon's motor was positioned inside of the camera. There was also a new adaptor which allowed adjustment to the iris via Bluetooth technology.

Guy then showed us the Panasonic Lumix 35 with a Prime lens, showing amazing depth –of



–field and clarity, and retailing at about half the price of the corresponding Canon lens. He then urged us to check on Ebay when considering various adaptors for the new DSLRs. Next on the list was the Sony NEX VG10 video cam. It was designed with a 35mm-camera sensor and though it featured interchangeable lenses, was not very user friendly. We were also intrigued by the Sony NEX5, a small XLR camera which, when fitted with a CCTV lens or a zoom, produced sharp images and was considered a very good buy.

We then discussed the various mounts which could be fitted to the Canon EOS 7D camera, including an external viewfinder and Guy reasoned that the final price could be approximately £5,000. He also revealed that the additional accessories added to the camera to facilitate its video role sometimes made it tedious to work with, stating that in reality, the small video cameras were still very popular, even with the influx of the DSLRs. We were then shown the Canon XA1 which was in pre-launch with a price tag of

£1,400. It carried a fixed lens and 2 AVCHD slots and was considered ideal for corporate customers. The Canon XF105, its older brother at £2000 was quite an improvement; marketed as a 'Pro Cam' it has a 5-hour battery life on its standard batteries.

We were also able to experience the Panasonic AG AF101. An interesting camera, though Guy's tests showed that it could not handle high contrast ratios. Finally Guy demonstrated the versatility of the Glide Track, costing £350. He placed it on a tripod and also on the side of the entrance door and we got a chance to see its fluid movement and numerous shot-angles which could be achieved.

We were very impressed with Guy's wealth of knowledge as he fielded many questions and we benefited greatly from the discussions as he highlighted the pros and cons of the cameras, lenses and other equipment he had brought. Once again we could have done with an additional half an hour of this riveting and educational evening. ■

North Scotland

By Brian Rae

A sunny Sunday afternoon in early June (yes, we really do have many sunny afternoons!) saw a gathering in my garden of 10 members of Area 1a North of Scotland branch of the IOV and their partners for a barbecue.

It was a real team effort, as one member did all the cooking, another acted as barman, and a third provided the music-in the form of a live (yes live!) group of



5 musicians who played a medley of tunes from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s to entertain the guests.

As the food was consumed, beer and wine flowed freely, conversation was lively; it was networking at its best. So good was it that, once the sun went down, people moved firstly to the summer house and latterly into the conservatory until well into the evening as they seemed reluctant to bring a fantastic event to an end.

Many have suggested making this an annual event but this Rep is more than happy to repeat the event.

Thanks are due to Peter



Harman of Vinten for the raffle prizes which he generously donated on his visit to our area meeting in November last year. Funds raised from the raffle went towards funding the food and wine. ■

Find out about IOV Meetings in your Area...

The IOV holds meetings on an area basis throughout the year. If you would like to receive notification by email of when your nearest meetings are being held, simply register on the IOV's website. You can then subscribe to receive automatic emails when new meeting notices are posted by the Area Rep.

Full details of how to register and subscribe can be found in the 'Using this Site' section located in the upper main menu of the website.

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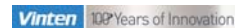
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Feature Creature

Mark Brindle builds a feature film camera rig around Panasonic's AF101

In 2006 I wrote an article for *Focus* entitled 'Creating the film look', which discussed using the RedrockMicro Depth of field adapter (the Redrock M2), attached to an HD video camera (Panasonic HVX200) and Nikon 35mm stills camera lenses to create video that looked like it had been shot with a film camera – using selective focus with shallow depth of field to create the 'film look'.

The camera rig worked very well most of the time and we shot lots of great looking footage from drama and documentary to music videos and corporate video, but the system had a few inherent problems like the size and weight of rig; the time to attach and align the DOF adapter; light loss across the adapter and the general poor low-light capability of the video camera plus video monitoring issues when the focal plane got very shallow!

Move to DSLR

Moving on, in 2009 we took the plunge into video DSLR when the Canon 7D came out with full 1080 HD video support. This saw the size and weight of the camera rig drop as dramatically as the low light capability increased due in part to the larger and more sensitive image sensor on the 7D and the lack of 'lens adapter'.

The APS-C sensor 7D (and the full-frame 5D MkII) are extremely popular for creating selective focus /shallow depth of field and for general low light video filming. We own quite a few of these cameras and use them with similar tripod and handheld rigs that we built for the original DOF adapter rigs – with the same follow focus, matte boxes, ND filters, same Nikon lenses (with Canon EOS adapters) and similar battery

systems using 'dummy' Canon battery adapters to allow the use of larger V-lock style batteries for all-day shooting.

The accessory market is full of competing products to help you use your DSLR to its full potential – as well as practices for you to employ to try to work around some of the DSLR limitations, such as:

- Lack of support for professional XLR audio (external pre-amps can help).
- Lack of audio gain controls (some firmware workarounds or use external recorder).
- Lack of built in ND filters (use screw-on fader NDs or Matt box ND filters).
- HDMI or composite video out turns off LCD on the back (use HDMI splitter with EVF and HD monitor).
- Over heating issues with long duration filming (use dummy battery adapter in camera).
- CMOS rolling shutter 'wobble effects' with some fast movement (some post production tools for this – or move camera slower).

Other limitations are harder to get away from such as:

Recording format (sub 50mbps HD 4:2:0 with no 'clean' external recording possible); lack of timecode (audio sync slip); single card slot so no continuous recording; single clip length limitation less than size of card; limited shutter angle/shutter speeds (i.e. potential flicker issues filming some pc screens due to frequency); aliasing and Moiré imaging problems with certain scenes. The only thing you can do is learn about the issues and avoid them if possible.

These limitations are not show stoppers but they do hamper the use of video DSLRs for certain types of filming – like

long-form events/ live performance, unless you plan in advance (i.e. coordinated card swaps across multiple cameras to ensure full coverage) and have adequate video monitoring to ensure good focus when handheld.

On the plus side, these shortcomings have resulted in some great products from manufacturers like RedrockMicro who have been building complimentary accessories like matte boxes, follow focus, focus whips, lens rings, hand grips and rod adapter rigs and added DSLR specific rigs and products. They are also working on new developments like Electronic Viewfinders (EVF) and remote follow focus systems (both yet to come to market). In addition, innovative niche manufacturers like Viewfactor Studios supply Canon 5D/7D cages for use on steadicam or crane/jibs and make wired and wireless mini controllers that allow focus adjustments from iPhone and iPod.

Blood Sucking Vampires

Part of my business is providing camera equipment rental and in August 2010 I was asked to put a kit list together for low budget horror feature film 'The

Reverend', shooting in early 2011. The Director, Neil Jones, was thinking of using several video DSLRs (Canon 5D mkII), but was concerned with the image quality when blown up for a cinema screen. There wasn't enough budget for the RED cinema camera and so I was looking for alternatives – something in-between the two really.

The last film we worked on with Neil (biopic boxing feature film 'Risen') was shot on a mix of 2/3inch CCD cameras – the Panasonic Varicam HPX2700 (shooting AVC Intra) and Sony F900 (shooting HDCAM), but Neil wanted a more shallow depth of field look this time and needed two cameras fully rigged up in the budget. I had been involved in some of the filming of *Risen* but mostly in the colour grade and visual effects at the end and knew I would be doing the same for *The Reverend*, so I wanted the best 4:2:2 codec we could get.



Large Sensor Cameras

Early 2011 saw the introduction of several new large sensor video cameras from Sony and Panasonic, aimed specifically at the video DSLR market (Indie/low budget filmmaker, promos, ads, music video etc) but with characteristics that solve some of the existing DSLR issues and would allow usage in other sectors (especially long form video).

The Sony F3 was introduced with a PL lens mount system and full frame image sensor but with a price tag that was also out of reach for us. Panasonic brought the substantially cheaper AF101 to market, albeit with a smaller sensor, and this camera seemed to be the ideal choice for 'The Reverend' in terms of features and functionality (and budget).

The AF101 video camera 'hybrid' comes with a micro 4/3rds lens mount and no lenses as standard. It supports both PAL and NTSC with a switchable system frequency to allow shooting in a very wide variety of frame rates. It looks very much like a slightly smaller Panasonic HVX200 (or HVX171) with the front lens half cut off. It also has many features in common with the HVX range and uses scene files to control gamma curves, detail, skin tone detail, colour balance and anyone familiar with Panasonic video cameras will see very familiar controls.

The menu is easy to operate but it's fairly easy to lose a feature so you have to keep looking in all the menus to find it again! There are a lot of extra features such as face tracking, focus meter, iris meter and a small function knob which allows you to check focus and iris at any point in the image.

It has built in ND filters (4 positions) and has real XLR inputs (two) with all the standard audio features you expect like 48v phantom power, mic/line, level controls, gain control, headphone socket with volume level.

Codecs, Compression and Recorders

Unlike the HVX200 and its DVCPROHD 4:2:2 codec and P2 cards, the AF101 shoots to two SD card slots (with relay from one card to the next) at a low data rate AVCCAM 4:2:0 codec. The camera standard video actually looks fantastic but it's not 4:2:2 which we needed for the films colour grading and VFX.

I knew the AF101 could output 4:2:2 8bit video from its built-in HD-SDI output (as well as its HDMI port at the same



time) – so we just needed a recorder (or two) to record the video signal from the camera. At the time there were several new camera-attached recorders coming out – including the Atmos Ninja (hard drive based Apple Prores 422 codec but HDMI-only at the time) and the AJA Ki Pro Mini (Prores 422 native up to 270mbps) as well as the Nano flash (Long gop MPEG or I-frame only up to 220mbps).

After a lot of calculating cost differences, re-reading marketing hype and waiting for product to be actually available, I went with the Nano flash. A no-nonsense, tried and tested unit with low power consumption, dual CF card slots with relay recording, basic controls and operating system menus and a host of after-market accessories readily available – such as a mounting bracket specifically for the AF101 and power cables to fit DTAP connectors on our Vlock battery plate that powered the whole rig. Subsequently, the BBC ratified the AF101 HD output for use at 50Mbps with an external recorder, (they used a Nano flash I believe) so were in good company.

Pimp my Rig

The camera rigs started to take shape, using some of our existing RedrockMicro 15mm rod mounting brackets, 15mm rods, Light weight Vocas mattbox, Redrock Follow focus, Ronford-Baker front handles, Hawk Woods Vlock battery plates with some extra cabling to allow one battery to power the camera and the Nano flash. We got quality Nikon lens mounts from MTF for each camera to make use of our wide range of Nikon prime lenses and looked for a decent Canon EF mount to use other zoom lenses we had got in for the Canon DSLRs over time.

The Micro 4/3rds mount is pretty standard and you can get adapters for PL mount cinema

lenses plus lenses from Leica, Minolta, Olympus, Pentax, Medium format lenses, M42, Sony Alpha and Contax amongst others, plus lenses made especially for the M43/MFT standard. But, getting a Canon EF mount was proving difficult. I had toyed with the idea of getting a set of Zeiss compact prime lenses (CP2) which can be fitted with Canon EF or PL mount to allow them to be used on Canon video DSLRs and PL mount cameras like the RED, AF101, Arri Alexa and Sony F3 but just couldn't justify the cost.

Birger Engineering had announced an electronic lens mount for Canon EF lenses on the AF101 (they ship one for the RED camera already) but it wasn't shipping in time so we ended up with a basic 'aperture' control mount from Kipon which allowed us to connect lenses and have some control over aperture plus infinity focusing, but it wasn't ideal. We are still waiting for the Birger adapter to be released to give us wireless remote follow focus for canon EF lenses but that will be subject of a future Focus article.

Backwards compatible add-ons

We found the AF101 still works with various older adapters made for the HVX200 – like the Bebob Foxi focus and Iris controller and an old Panasonic LANC start / stop/zoom controller we had in the drawer. Unfortunately, the older Panasonic batteries do not work with the AF101 so we bought in a few long life IDX batteries when using the camera in its fully de-rigged guise.

The top handle can be removed easily with a Phillips screwdriver and the side handle comes off too, leaving behind a cold shoe adapter in a handy spot for a radio mic. The

microphone shock mount comes off and can be placed in two positions – at the front near the top cold shoe adapter and one at the rear near the Electronic Viewfinder (EVF) so you can still remove the top carry handle and have the shock mount in place which is handy.

Monitoring

The AF101 provides video out to both its HD-SDI and HDMI at the same time as the flip out LCD or on-board EVF (and also the composite video out). This makes monitoring options seem very easy compared to video DSLRs.

We have several HDMI and HDSDI field monitors along with HDMI splitters, HDMI to HDSDI adapters and various bits and bobs needed for video DSLRs to be useful handheld as well as tethered, so I was confident we had what we needed already.

The AF101 built-in EVF is very poor – its in the wrong place for the type of rig we were using (for any handheld work at least) but its also got some strange rainbow strobe effect on the display when you move the camera which makes it difficult to use. The AF101 flip out LCD is brilliant by contrast, with useful peaking detail feature and a great little waveform monitor, but sadly it has no expanded focus (nor does the EVF) – and no way to zoom in for checking critical focus (especially as your using prime lenses mostly).

This is a major flaw and means you must use some form of external monitoring at all times if your using any kind of shallow depth.

I was scheduled to work on filming The Reverend this time as 1st AC (aka Focus puller) and I knew there would be times when I would have to pull focus just from a monitor or EVF when



using a two camera setup so I needed a decent EVF for handheld work. We had recently purchased an HDMI EVF from Korean manufacturer Cineroid to use with our video DSLR's and so I tried this out with the AF101. It is a small LCD style viewfinder with a flip over magnifying eyepiece. We coupled the EVF with a Zacuto arm and an add-on battery adapter to allow us to power the EVF from the same Vlock battery to make the rig more easily powered. The Cineroid has a good pixel to pixel zoom function, peaking options (ok) and a black and white function which is useful. This unit supports HDMI (with HDMI loop through) and composite SD video with audio and can be powered by canon DSLR batteries too.

The Cineroid does suffer from a bit of fogging, even coupled with microfleece/chamois leather eyepieces from Bluestar, but its better then the AF101 EVF. Zacuto also have a similar LCD style EVF along with Redrockmicro who have designed one from scratch (but not released it yet). The Cineroid is good but could be better and I will be investigating alternative EVFs as they become available.

24p workflow

With the AF101 rigged up with Nano flash I worked on the 24p workflow, using the camera stop/start timecode to trigger recording on the Nano flash. Unfortunately the AF101 24p over 60i output cadence wasn't supported by the Nano flash, so it couldn't remove the pulldown signal properly (like it does with most other 24p cameras), so we had to use the special 24psF mode on the AF101 instead. The Nano flash manufacturer, Convergent Designs were very responsive trying to help isolate the problem but I am not holding my breath for a firmware fix just yet.

This led to new issues with monitoring video. 24psf is not supported on the HDMI so the AF101 would not send out video on the HDMI in this mode and so the Cineroid EVF could not be used in HD mode and would only work with composite video out (so again no expanded focus!). The Nano flash has an option to do some reprocessing from its HDSDI to HDMI and with certain setups we could use a Marshal HDMI monitor connected to the Nano flash (on our second camera rig), but the Cineroid EVF, the Small HD DP1x HDMI monitors would not support the 24psf reprocessed signal. We tried a loan blackmagic design

HDSDI to HDMI adapter to see if they could output a usable signal in this mode (thank you Richard Payne from Holdan) but we were foiled. Our Panasonic and Tamuz HD monitors worked fine in 24psf mode on HDSDI but no EVF in HD mode – only composite video out. It was better then nothing but it was disappointing to not solve this problem.

The other side to the workflow was the output of the Nano flash. We chose I-frame only recording at 180mbps to maximise quality without having to buy too many more CF cards. Even though the cards we had were 'ok' for higher data rates (in theory) we encountered a few problems at 180mbps and so ended up filming at 140mbps XDCAM 422 codec. The Nano flash automatically ramps down if it encounters problems (i.e if it thinks the speed of the cards is too slow), and one of the consequences of having the Nano flash recording start triggered by timecode from the camera meant whenever we dropped into playback/preview mode on the camera by mistake and played a clip that way – the Nano would start to re-record the same clip! Not ideal, but this wasn't a real problem except when sometimes it would drop the recording rate to 100mbps which went unnoticed for a while. The normal playback method was to playback from the Nano flash – sometimes a bit clunky trying to find the clip you wanted but in general very easy to do.

Card offloading and our DIT

We had a Digital Imaging Technician (DIT) for The Reverend (Dan the DIT!) who was responsible for making multiple copies of the CF cards and SD cards from the cameras and Nano flash and to log all the video clips and audio recordings so that the Director could make a rough cut of the film as we filmed (Neil never seemed to sleep!).

I supplied a couple of Nexto 2700 card offload units for copying – these are essentially hard drives with SD and CF card adapters on the side and a basic operating system that copies and verifies cards at high speed. These units were invaluable for making the initial fast copies of the cards on set. We were double recording on



both the AF101 SD cards and the Nano flash CF cards as a precaution and both sets of data were logged. The SD card AVCCAM video data was automatically converted into Apple Prores 422 when ingested into Final Cut Pro, but as it started as 4:2:0 in the camera this was not being used really – except for the 60p footage.

Dan was also working on the graphic novel and some of the EPK photos for The Reverend so wasn't just waiting for us to hand over cards!

One great feature of the AF101 is the ability to do variable frame rate in 1080p mode and not just in 720p mode like most other cameras. We shot some sequences at 1080/60p slow mo although we knew the Nano flash recorded version would not be usable, as 1080/60p is not a standard yet and so even though the Nano recorded 'something' its not usable. Hopefully no one will notice the slow mo material looking any different to the normal stuff once its graded though.

Panasonic supply a couple of utilities for AVCCAM – a rudimentary clip viewer and a card recovery utility. I have had a couple of instances with long form recording where a long clip may be corrupted in some way. This was only noticed when transferring into FCP and annoyingly it crashing the program. So far, the AVCCAM recovery software has quickly and easily fixed the clip problems and I have been able to ingest footage, perhaps losing a few frames at worst case. I guess this was a consequence of inferior SD media cards (compared with say P2 cards) and a reason this camera also supports SDHC and larger capacity SDXC cards.

Wide Open

One new lens acquisition that we made specifically for the film was the m43 mount Voigtlander 25mm f0.95 prime. I knew The Reverend would be shooting at night a lot (it is a vampire film after all!) and so I thought the very wide aperture would help in case the low light and high ISO capabilities of the AF101 were not as good as I had read about. Unfortunately, it seems many other AF101 owners thought the same and coupled with the aftermath of the Japanese Tsunami, this lens was on order for a very long time and missed the first 4 weeks of shooting. We did receive it in time for the delayed final week of shooting (which included the opening shot of the film). And yes, it is an awesome lens!



It was nice to have the option of f0.95 and higher ISO but I was very pleased with the low light capability although I think we never went higher then ISO 500 for the whole shoot (max is ISO 3200). The DOP Alessio Valori (AIC) preferred to light more, although we did have a limited lighting budget too so occasionally I had to ask to up the ISO so we could close down the aperture a bit to help with focus.

Conclusion

Aside from the expanded focus I am very happy with the AF101 camera. With a large enough sensor for shallow DOF, good low light performance, built in ND filters, good XLR audio and dual card slots the camera ticks all the boxes as a video DSLR / replacement. The slightly smaller sensor means its less sensitive to low light then the Canon 5D MkII and Canon 7D and you need wider lenses for wide angle shots, but it's a newer sensor and seems to not exhibit much Moiré or aliasing and we saw no CMOS rolling shutter wobble even when shooting fast action scenes.

There are a few features I haven't tried yet like Optical Image stabilization (OIS) and face recognition/tracking – features which need an electronic auto focus lens like the Panasonic Lumix 20mm f1.7 or Lumix 14mm f2.5 pancake lenses plus many more zooms lenses in the micro 4/3rds range. It's a versatile camera and not just in the video DSLR niche – but its certainly not a 'point and shoot' solution. I've since used it for corporate video (interviews and long form conference filming) and had it side by side with the Canon 7D, but I prefer the AF101 for functionality and image.

Neil is very happy with the footage we shot for 'The Reverend' and I have more rentals lined up for the summer so I am happy too! ■

Mark Brindle M.M Inst.V
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Size matters

Why you should never buy a small-sensor camera again - By Ian Sandall

This last year has seen the inevitable by-product of the DSLR revolution; the introduction by major manufacturers of large sensor cameras with all the advantages of that format with none of the disadvantages of the DSLR. What I'm going to say here may be anathema to some members - and downright treason to others, but it has to be said.

Less than three years ago the Canon 5D Mk II started a major revolution - causing a sea-change in the quality of film-making available to us. The reason was Depth of Field - or lack of it - and suddenly a three thousand pound set-up could deliver something that you just couldn't get before without spending a fortune on kit or rentals - the prices being well out of the league of most members.

Suddenly the whole world went mad over the 5D2 and its successors; as a result, shallow DoF became the norm, not the exception. And as soon as DSLRs started to be used in anger, the pictures from conventional video cameras just looked dated.

The lost craft

Before long, Vimeo was awash with focus pulls, blurred backgrounds and artfully graded tosh. In many cases, execution had subsumed the message and our craft of storytelling (for that it what it is, when all is said and done) was being overwhelmed by technique and process.

Because to actually shoot anything worthwhile on a DSLR, you had to be pretty good in the first place - or have had a lot of time to practice! A totally manual set-up didn't suit everyone or every situation and using stills lenses for video took a lot of getting used to - especially the fine focus needed for HD. So looking after all that made it very

easy to lose touch with the story. (You know, the one you were trying to create in the first place...)

And finally, when you did manage to shoot everything, you then had to wrestle with unhelpful codecs, moiré patterns, aliasing, compression artefacts and rolling shutter - all of which could make shots unusable.

Recently, the backlash has started and many film-makers are trying to get back to telling pure stories - whether a wedding, a corporate or a SIV. Not bothering so much with DoF or 'art' - just telling the story. And fortunately a new breed of cameras has been launched to help them do just that - whilst still retaining the flexibility of interchangeable lenses and the potential for creating shallow DoF.

However, one advantage of the large-sensor revolution has been that the zoom - that dreaded give-away of amateurs and the staple of old-school TV cameramen has almost disappeared from our screens. Along with hunting auto-focus, audible AGC on audio and auto-iris, the zoom has now been relegated to the recycle bin of history. Not many will mourn its passing.

New tools for a new era

So onwards and upwards into a brave new world of large sensor cameras that actually have a form factor that gives us all a chance. Cameras that have everything that a proper TV camera has (apart from a screwed-on zoom lens of course) at a price that starts to make sense. Enter then the Panasonic AG-AF101 and the Sony NEX FS-100. Excluding lenses both are priced at under £4000 + VAT.

Enough has been written already about these two cameras; the Sony has the bigger super 35 sensor but the Panasonic has HD SDI out. The Panasonic has built-in ND filters but the Sony has a far better monitor. And so on. But for the money - whichever you choose - both offer an appreciable step-up in quality.

So why should you buy one and relegate that old 1/3rd inch sensor camera to a back-up - or better still, a listing on eBay?

First, you'll get a quality of picture you've never experienced before. As good as a 5D2 but without the handling drawbacks of DSLR. With the right lenses (and both will take almost anything with the right adaptor) you'll be able to create that super-shallow DoF - if you want

it. And although both are more expensive than conventional HD video cameras currently available from the major manufacturers, the difference in quality makes that really worthwhile!

Second, you'll have what is approaching a proper camera in terms of form factor - although both will need some sort of rig to make shoulder shooting viable as they are both quite small. On the plus side, both are easier and faster to set up with controls where you'd expect them to be.

Lastly, unlike DSLRs, you'll have no hassles with audio. Both have XLR inputs and full audio controls. (Of course if you haven't experienced the audio hassles with DSLRs this won't mean much to you!)

What's keeping you?

So in conclusion, why wouldn't you buy one? Well, there's the issue of money of course and it would be possible to buy two very usable conventional cameras for the same money, once you factored in lenses - although both the Sony and Panasonic have reasonably cheap zooms available as options.

And then there's the question of whether to wait for something better - which inevitably will be just around the corner.

For instance Canon has been very quiet of late (just quietly making a lot of money from the DSLR video boom perhaps?) so it's inevitable that there will be a Canon video camera coming along that hopefully takes EOS lenses and features a full frame sensor - notwithstanding the damage that might do to the rest of their prosumer camera range.

But if you're looking at buying a small sensor camera this year - don't! Large sensor cameras are here to stay and within a year or two will become the norm. So my advice is either buy large sensor now or hang on for a while. But don't wait too long! ■

Ian Sandall M.M.Inst.V.
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Tech Talk

What's hot in the world of pro-video - by Kevin Cook

I've been playing on the slides this month. No, not over the park with the other kids, but with a camera slider and my 550D. But before I bang on about that my quest to test a slider resulted in me getting my hands on another piece of kit that I fell in love with so much that I refused to hand it back.

One of the sliders that took my fancy at NAB is produced by Cinevate and whilst in touch with Dan Wheeler at PEC Video in Central London (their UK distributor) to sort out a review he asked me if I'd also take a look at the Habbycam camera shoulder mount. I'd not been than impressed with the other mounts I'd played with in the past but, as Dan was sourcing the slider for me, I couldn't really refuse could I?

Three packages shortly arrived - one long box with the slider (more on which later), another with a Manfrotto tripod to mount the slider - and the third, smaller, box obviously containing the Habbycam. I put that to one side - feeling uninspired.

I think it wasn't until the following day that I got round to opening the Habbycam box and started to connect it up. It came in two separate parts - the shoulder pad with counter weight already attached and the main camera plate, rails and grips (again - already together). It took me about 1-minute to get these two sections together and into a shape that was usable as a camera shoulder mount. This is the first thing I fell in love with about the Habbycam - its almost complete flexibility of



configuration. Whether you are using it with a DSLR or a proper video camera, you have sufficient X, Y and Z position adjustment to bring your viewfinder or LCD into perfect alignment. There are also oodles of fixing points on the rear of the shoulder pad to attach further weights or accessories to give perfect back-front balance too.

The rods and handles can also be turned in, out and revolved independently to give you the most comfortable arm positions for extended hand-held filming. And, when its all tightened up, there's none of that horrible "give and twist" that I've seen in other camera mounts.

It is rare that I rave about things but this is simply the best camera support I have come across - light and extremely comfortable in use and infinitely adaptable to fit any body or camera shape. It also made my 550D a pleasure to use hand-held.

Enough said!

Slider rider

Part of all the fuss and enthusiasm that's been created around DSLRs and shallow DOF cameras is a result of the massive rise in the use of camera sliders. The impact that a camera slide can give to a shot is nothing new though. Camera dollies and tracks have been around almost as long as movie cameras themselves - and help to create depth in a scene through the use of temporal parallax (you can read all about that in April 2009 edition of Focus).

What has changed is the size and weight of cameras and the achievable DOF (which heightens the slide effect) - and consequently the size and cost of the slider. Most of the popular systems now are mountable on a single, inexpensive tripod and are a meter or less in length, fast to set up, operable by one person and easy to get into confined spaces. All these features (and the fact that they can cost as little as £300) has

brought them into the realms of wedding day film production. You will rarely see a draw-dropping example of a wedding day film these days that doesn't include a slide or two.

I've poked around with one or two sliders at shows with varying levels of excitement. At NAB it seemed that every other stand had a slide solution or two - ranging from the downright cheap and nasty through to highly engineered, computer controlled engineering masterpieces that would set you back many thousands. However, the one that I really couldn't stop fiddling with was the Cinevate Pegasus - a super-smooth carbon fibre rail system costing around £850 plus VAT.

The Pegasus uses small wheels for runners that can either clamp to the rail system (so it can be used like any other slider or used to "fly" a camera if mounted upside down) or make it useable as a stand-alone table-top camera dolly. I dare you - next time you see one at an exhibition have a play with it. It will be hard not to go for your credit card!

This brings me back to Dan at PEC Video (Cinevate's UK distributor), who persuaded me try out Cinevate's much cheaper Atlas 10 DSLR Camera Slider - coming in about half the price of the Pegasus and based on a





bearing-running camera sled mounted on a meter-long track. There are various attachments you can get for the Atlas - including a set of all-terrain legs, vertical mounting kit and a counter-weight system (highly recommended if you are going to get the vertical mount option!).

Anyway, after I had overcome the disappointment in not getting the Pegasus to play with at my leisure I set about using the Atlas on some trial shots of my garden pond (self-built - and very proud of it too!).

Dan did warn me that, as with any slider, you have to practice in order to produce the perfect slide. Whilst the sled will move pretty effortlessly along the track you still need to apply the movement yourself in a constant, fluid style with a smooth start and end. As we all know involuntary twitches come when you least want them - and look even more exaggerated when at the end of an almost perfect slow slide on a close-up of a static subject. I was starting to think I had contracted Saint Vitus dance!

Whilst I don't think I actually managed a 100% perfect slide, by the end of my experiments I was getting close. The end results can be seen on IOVTV (<http://vimeo.com/channels/iov#24530256>). Please excuse the title which is a family joke and not me being pretentious.

Whilst its not a comment on its abilities as a slider, unlike the Habbycam the Atlas did go back to PEC Video. I really don't think I've experienced enough of these devices to fork out the cash just yet. Its actually made me want to check out the more expensive options with motion control and programmable moves. But even before that I want to check out some of the cheaper, home-made options!

Taking the 'P' out of your HDMI

You know me... I like to talk about technology but I'm not the most technologically astute person on the planet. So, when Dave Shapton, President of Atomos EMEA, offered to shed some light on the subject of Progressive over Interlaced and what you get out of your HDMI pipe I couldn't resist. The rest of the words here are Dave's...

"Now that cost-effective external records are available, we're all getting a chance to look closely at exactly what comes over an HDMI cable when you plug it into your camera. HDMI was only ever designed to plug into a monitor - not a recorder, and this explains why it sometimes behaves differently to what you might expect."

HDMI is not like FireWire. It can only carry an uncompressed

video signal (plus, of course, digital audio). So you can't send DV, HDV or AVCHD over it. By definition, if you see video over HDMI, it's uncompressed. Of course, you can play back video from a compressed source over HDMI, but you have to uncompress it first! This is what will happen if you record video on your camera and play it back through the HDMI port to your television.

But if your camera is in "record" mode, it will output video that has never been compressed before through the HDMI connection. You can record this to (for example) Apple ProRes, if you use something like a Ninja, and this will give you better quality than you would get from the camera's internal recording, because ProRes is a milder, kinder codec. Your footage will be cleaner, and you'll avoid motion artefacts as well.

Most people these days want to record progressive video. In most cases, it looks nicer, and avoids nasty-looking "interlace" artefacts when you freeze frame or view the footage on a progressive screen - which most of them are, these days.

In Europe, you can forget about 24p. You should only ever use 24p if you are absolutely certain that you're going to distribute on film. For the other 99% of you, use 25p. The point is that 25p divides into 50 exactly. 24p doesn't.

Why is this important? 25 frames per second is too slow a refresh rate. Virtually every display system will double this

and show each frame twice, to give an effective refresh rate of 50 Hz.

So, let's imagine you have an external ProRes recorder. Set your camera to record 25p, and plug the HDMI cable into your recorder. Look at the screen of the recorder to see what signal you're recording. Obviously it's... 50i. How can this be? Why is HDMI outputting an interlaced signal when your camera is recording progressive?

The answer is that your video is still progressive. Each of the two fields making up the interlaced frame is derived from the same progressive image. There is no time-displacement between the two fields. All that's happened is that one field contains the odd-numbered lines and the other contains the even lines. Put them together on a screen or a timeline and they will merge back together to give a true progressive image.

Onwards

I've got some other new toys being sent to me to review for next month's Tech Talk. Sorry - but its more rigging and a couple of Tokina lenses that I'll be testing on the 550D.

I'm also going to be looking at some of the home-built slider solutions out there - and some other more inventive slider solutions for the ecologically minded! ■

Kevin Cook F.Inst.V.



AF 101

Ninja captures progressive footage through 50i

AF 101 set to record at 1080i50. Ninja reports 1080i50. Footage looks interlaced



AF 101 set to record at 1080p25. Ninja reports 1080i50. Footage looks progressive



The AF 101 therefore wraps its 25p footage in a 50i signal. When viewing and editing the interlaced footage looks progressive at all times. If set to record 1080i50, the footage will look interlaced at all times as the two fields are based on a 50 Hz sampling of the image and not 25.

Mon 6 13 20 27

Tue 7 14 21 28

Wed 8 15 22 29

Thu 9 16 23 30

Fri 10 17 24 31

Mon 4 11 18 25

Tue 5 12 19 26

Wed 6 13 20 27

Thu 7 14 21 28

Fri 8 15 22 29

Mon 1 8 15 22 29

Tue 2 9 16 23 30

Wed 3 10 17 24 31

Thu 4 11 18 25

Fri 5 12 19 26



By Gerry Thornhill

Days in the life

Of a (small) video company

Wednesday 11th May 2011

Took H to East Surrey Hospital for the first appointment with her surgeon since he sent her home a month ago. The place was the usual hustle bustle, which to the newcomer seems chaotic but experienced hospital veterans like H and me can see there is order behind it all.

After X-rays and other tests we were ushered into the surgeon's presence. I was so surprised. Such a pleasant chap. Making jokes, pointing at the X-ray on the monitor screen, explaining what he and his team had done, what they were going to do, and how, and when they hoped to do it. The human side of the NHS.

"H should be able to get rid of those things," he told me, pointing to her crutches leaning against the wall (and for once had not fallen to the floor) "within the next three months or so. If not – sue me!"

I took his name and details.

Friday 13th May 2011

Glad I'm not superstitious considering the date. It's actually been quite a good day. A young lady, Anne, called us and asked if we would film her wedding in July – but not edit it and produce the DVD, as she wanted to do that herself.

"Can I come and talk to you – and bring my dad?" She asked.

Then, later in the afternoon, another lady, Sylvia, rang.

"You transferred some VHS tapes to DVD for me a few months ago, can you do some more?"

"Of course," I said.

Well, okay, I know this is small fry, and it's only a few Pounds, and there is nothing "artistic" or "challenging" here, and I certainly don't get that 'I'm going to create something that has never been seen before' feeling. But these little jobs help to pay for the petrol, help toward the 'phone bill, pay for the 'large' stamps, don't they?

Saturday 14th May 2011

Bit of a moral dilemma has popped up today. It would be interesting, I think to myself, as I ponder it, how other IOV

members would approach this.

So, here it is:

A very good friend of ours, a long time colleague with whom H worked with during her BA years, and whom she sees socially quite often, has asked us to film her eight year old daughters' confirmation in a few weeks time and next week take photographs and film the little girl in her confirmation dress in the grounds of a local hotel. H's friend is Spanish and, apparently, taking photographs some time before the actual ceremony is a Spanish tradition.

"Please tell me how much all this will be," she has said, "and I will send you a cheque."

"We can't really charge her," says H, "She is such a good and close friend."

I hesitate for a couple of seconds and then agree, "No, we can't."

But the friend has insisted on paying – "It would make me feel more comfortable," she has said in an email to us.

I emailed her back and said okay, pay us £60.00 to cover the petrol and materials and we won't charge for our time, as we are glad to do it for you. But no – this is not acceptable to her. "You are not charging enough," she has told us, "Charge me what you would normally charge."

Well, normally for a job like this – three hours filming, editing, photographs, three DVDs – we would charge around £500.00. But the lady, and her family are really good friends – we have been invited to the celebratory lunch after the confirmation ceremony being held in a posh hotel – we know her family well too, we socialise, have them round to dinner in the winter, they invite us to their barbecue's in the summer. We can't charge them £500.00. Can we?

Monday 16th May 2011

The young lady, Anne her name, who wants us to just film her wedding day in July (she will do the editing) came round late this afternoon with her Dad, Peter. He, very pleasant, friendly, easy to talk to, she too very pleasant, mid twenties, with a beaming

smile, and stunningly attractive.

We talked editing for a while, Anne's Dad taking a lot of interest. She uses Final Cut and seems pretty familiar with it. We finally agreed a price and her Dad said he would send the deposit 'straight away'. I said, "If you need any advice with the editing when you start work on it, or anything...?" But afterwards I thought that was a bit patronising. Let's face it – she must be nearly fifty years younger than me and therefore probably knows more about FCP than I ever will.

Sunday 22nd May 2011

Woke this morning with a stiff breeze rustling the leaves in the oak trees bordering our garden, the birds singing, and through the window I could see the sun well up in a patchy blue sky. I stretched my arms out thinking what a wonderful life this is. Then I thought: Hold on – wasn't the world supposed to end yesterday – is what I hear and see all real? Wasn't I supposed to be "raptured" to heaven? (Or, indeed, in my case, more likely the other place.) But then, as if to answer my thoughts, I hear a news item on the radio announcing that Harold Camping, the Californian Evangelist, who had predicted that the second coming and the end of the world would be on 21st May 2011, had made a mistake. What a relief! But my joy is short-lived. The end, our Harold now says, will definitely be on October 21st 2011. Oh dear, only five months guys...

Wednesday 1st June 2011

Up early and over to Gatwick to meet C off the BA flight from Orlando. It is only seven in the morning but it is already warm and sunny, he must have brought this weather with him. It's the usual pick-up-and-drop-chaos at Gatwick, being waved at and moved on by officious looking men in uniforms almost as soon as I had pulled in to the kerb, but we eventually meet up. He is looking well; chats about the footage he has shot at Circle

Bay, how friendly everyone was and how encouraging it is that there is so much interest in the project.

Incidentally, while over there it was decided he should purchase the flash drive, which goes with the Sony NX5 and we would keep it at our Circle Bay base. A price comparison between British suppliers and suppliers based in the United States showed a considerable saving with the latter. The lowest price we could find in the U.K. was £744.00. (including VAT.) But when buying via the Internet don't you have to be careful? C found a company in California selling the item for \$640.00 (£400.00.) ordered it, and then came the problems. The company wouldn't send it to the Florida address because the debit card's address was different (i.e. our U.K. address) even though our American bank had issued it. C cancelled the order and went back to the Internet hoping to find a company that would be willing to send the item to Circle Bay. He found one in New York. It was a little more at \$679.00 (£424.00) with free delivery – but still a considerable saving over the British price. He ordered it and then found the Californian company had already taken the money from the card! We got it back in the end but it took several 'phone calls, emails and a lot of time – not to mention frustration and annoyance.

Had C brought the flash-drive home, declared it at Customs – which, of course, he would have done, he would have been charged VAT bringing the price up to £508.80 plus (I am guessing) import duty and it would still be a saving of £150.00 or more. There is only one phrase that comes to mind with experiences like this: "Rip-off Britain."

Busy next week – a wedding rehearsal and a wedding; a confirmation rehearsal, several more VHS to DVD conversions and more 'familiarisation' time with our NX5 cameras. ■

Gerry Thornhill M.M.Inst.V.
GHC Video Productions

Discover how to...

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This full-day training workshop will take you through a step-by-step process of shooting a talking-head interview. Based on the IOV's VideoSkills syllabus, delegates will be taken through the legal issues, how to light the scene, picking the perfect microphone, composing the perfect shot, and finally - how to edit and post to the Internet!

Business & Legal

As well as the technical challenges, delegates will be taken through the business and legal aspects of recording interviews - dealing with model and location release documents and contracts - as well as being given guidance on the Health & Safety issues of working in these environments.

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Learn how to get the most out of any lighting conditions - with step-by-step instruction on basic 3-point lighting through to adding kickers, gobos and working in mixed lighting conditions. Understand the importance of colour temperature, intensity and light quality in this inspirational session that will make you want to practice your new skills the moment you arrive home.

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Delegates will be shown the importance of matched framing and how to perfectly frame your subjects in an interview environment - as well as the importance of manual control over Focus and Exposure. Delegates will be guided through the rule of thirds, line of action, shot sizes and how to enhance your imagery with artistic use of foreground and background information.

Dealing with audio

Choosing the right microphone and monitoring equipment are key elements in recording better interviews - as well as microphone placement, obtaining the optimum recording levels and reducing background noise. Delegates will also be shown the impact of the inverse law in relation to sound recording.

Post Production

Delegates will be shown the variety of shot transitions used in editing interviews to create an effect of live multi-camera coverage. By the end of the workshop delegates will understand the importance of motivational cuts, cutaways and establishing shots within an interview. Finally, delegates will be shown how to efficiently encode the programme for Internet delivery.



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Gilwell Park Conference Centre

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THE LIST



INSTITUTE OF
VIDEOGRAPHY

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- A** Corporate, Industrial & Commercial Video Services
- B** Wedding, Event & Celebrational Video Services
- C** Freelance Videographer
- D** Freelance Audio Engineer
- E** Freelance Lighting Technician
- F** Freelance Directing
- G** Script Writing
- H** Freelance Production Assistant
- I** Presenter and Voice-overs
- J** Graphic Design & Animation Services
- K** Freelance Editing Services
- L** Training
- M** Broadcast Production
- N** Special Interest Videos
- O** Steadicam Operator
- P** Underwater Videographer

PLEASE NOTE: In this listing Members have declared their own areas of specialisation. The declaration of a work type should not be regarded as an endorsement by the Institute of Videography.

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And Another Thing...

Whoops - there goes another bit of civilised discourse

Even the best argument can be spoiled by poor presentation.

Why is it that for some folk any view that doesn't correspond with their own has to be met with scorn and /or personal abuse? Just the other day a request for information, let's say from Member A, was posted on the IOV forum which elicited a number of helpful responses. But one response, from Member B, was clearly not to the taste of one reader, Member C, and so C decided to describe the advice proffered by B as 'crap' and went on to advise Member B that he didn't know what he was talking about.

Now it is true that occasionally some of the advice offered on the forum is poorly thought out but in this instance

the advice by Member B was based on his own personal experience and, at least in my view, certainly merited consideration by Member A in taking on board the various views offered. But even if it had been transparently bad advice there are ways and means for other members to 'correct' such stuff without resorting to unpleasantness. It's perfectly possible that member C had a valid point but he could have made it much more powerfully by presenting it in a civilised way.

Gee thanks

Our company's bank keeps writing to us to offer us a loan. Well that's nice I hear you say - how thoughtful of them. The thing is we don't need a loan, have never in our fifteen years existence asked them for a loan and frankly are somewhat underwhelmed to note that they consider us to be good for a loan no larger than £2500!

No doubt they have made many tens of thousands of similarly useless offers as part of a cynical exercise designed to demonstrate to the government how nobly they are assisting small businesses; by aggregating these individually piffling amounts in their response they can show just how much they are seemingly offering.

Celebrity Britain

I was in Mothercare the other day selecting presents for my soon-to-be one year old grandson. It's amazing how

excited one can get lifting off the shelves such delights as a dumper truck, a car transporter (with cars!), a fly 'n' go jumbo jet (with pilot and passengers) and a cement mixer - all in bright colours. Anyway I noticed a young mother with a push chair also selecting toys and recognised her as the actress Siobhan Hayes who plays the ditzy blonde *Abi* in *My Family* - the evergreen popular domestic sitcom featuring Robert Lindsay and Zoe Wanamaker as *Ben* and *Susan Harper*.

Many media folk reside around these parts including lots of actors, presenters etc. and so you wouldn't think that this would arouse much interest. But when I went to pay for the toys (20% off if you provide your grandchildren's birth dates and your e-mail address) there was a definite frisson of excitement amongst the sales ladies gathered by the till who had also spotted her and were animatedly discussing what recent TV parts she had played.

Clearly there is still some mileage to be had from being a 'celebrity' even in this 'seen-it-all-before' age.

Deep Innit?

And talking of Zoe Wanamaker - we all trooped off to The National Theatre recently to see her in *The Cherry Orchard*. Now I can take deep and gloomy (sometimes) but my goodness you really have to be a Chekhov fan to appreciate this play. After just ten minutes I, together with

one of our friends, was fast asleep and had to rely thereafter on my wife to nudge me awake every now and again.

Mind you there were a couple of exciting moments. The first was when I realised that *Varya* was being played by Claudie Blakley - one of my very favourite actresses (I've only previously seen her on the telly). And the other was when a lady in the third row felt faint and had to be led out by some medics (unfortunately in *Varya's* key scene). But that was about it really.

I guess I'm just a pleb at heart.

That's an 'A' List Client

Our training company *Swanrose* recently gained a new corporate client. Like a lot of companies who seek our services they are setting up their own video production unit to produce video content on a regular basis. But unlike some companies who tread this route they are determined to acquire the best possible kit for the job and to invest in whatever additional training or production and post-production assistance that they may need.

It's great to come across folk who have a realistic idea of what is required to produce company-enhancing video material and who are happy to invest a realistic amount of time, effort and money to achieve this. ■

Stuart Little M.M.Inst.V.



Stuart Little is a director of KLA Film and Video Communication and Swanrose Video Training and Consultancy



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Contact Paul: 01469 532426

Email: info@weddinghd.co.uk [200]

Sony Z5e / Editing PC

Low hours Z5e - less than two years old so still under Sony Warranty - and Power PC with Vegas Pro and others. I'm selling my beloved Sony Z5e, bought for a specific project, and which has low hours (Operation 6x10H / Drum run 5x10H / Tape run 3x10H). In as new condition both inside and out with absolutely no marks, scratches. Still has box and will still be under Sony Warranty (bought in October 2009). Can include my Kata CC 192 bag (worth approx £110), plus associated XLR mic kit if needed. Email for more info on these. Also selling my quad core Intel editing PC which includes Sony Vegas Pro 9, Sony Cinescore, CS4 Creative Suite (After Effects, Premier, Photoshop etc etc). Can email full specs but rest assured it steams through everything I've ever thrown at it (mostly footage shot in HDV using above). Looking for £2,800 for the Z5e and £500 for the PC. Both will include P+P. Contact Matt: 07813030345
Email: matt@eclipsefilm.co.uk [199]

Video Camera's & Accessories for sale on Ebay

Panasonic P2 VXH-200 NTSC NOT PAL Light Use £1,650.00, Case Cruiser Like Pell case fits HVX-200 HVX 200 £145.00, SONY HVR-Z1E PROFESSIONAL HDV CAMCORDER HVR-Z1 LOW HRS £1,675.00, Panasonic P2 HVX-200E PAL HVX 200 Close up Lens 82mm £85.00 Sony ECM-678 Microphone Suit EX1 EX3 Z1 Z1E DSR HVR HVX £499.00, Panasonic AJ-PCS060 P2 60GB Hard Drive HVX-200 AG-HPX17 £475.00, Lighting Kit suitable for Sony Z1 EX1 EX3 HVX-200 VX2 £299.00, EX3 Fujinon 14 x Zoom Lens for Sony PMW-EX3 Xdcam HD £649.00, Another Fujinon 14 x Lens for PMW-EX3 £499.00 Not on Ebay, Panasonic P2 32Gb Card HVX-200 AG-HPX17, Case R Series £499.00, Panasonic P2 16Gb Card HVX-200 AG-HPX17, Case R Series £275.00, Century HD-06WA-HX2 .6X HD Wide Angle Adapter HVX-200 £249.00, Canon YH16x7 KRS 1x12 CCD 16x Lens £699.00 or Contact John on 07732-641-839
Email: weddingvideos@uk2.net [199]

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Sony HVR-V1E HDV CamCorder + additional 6000mAh Battery pack & Hahnel twin charger + Rode NTG-2mic. Very light use in VGC. £1800. (Cumbria) Contact Geoff: 01539 821872
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Sony HVR-S270E Video Camera

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Contact Denis: 00353 21 7334533
Email: capturedoccasion@hotmail.com

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Contact Jonathan: 0787 981 6293
Email: Flanagan.eng@btinternet.com

Kino Flo Diva Lite 400

Including, hard case, stand, lamp case, lamps and Flozier. Only been used 3 times (about 8 hours use) so looks and smells brand new. Price £1250
Here are the specs from the CVP website (http://www.creativevideo.co.uk/index.php?t=product/kino-flo_kdl4230). They are selling one for £1398.00 which is a model display unit so will have many hours more usage.
Contact Shaun: 01509 505438 [198]
Email: enquiries@beautifullifeuk.com

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Outline of the workshop

This intense full-day VideoSkills workshop is aimed at those wanting to understand the technical, legal and creative challenges that they will face when asked to create a video of a music performance - or indeed any live or mimed performance that requires either multi or single-camera coverage. This includes performers' showreels, sell-through videos of performers, wedding marryoke and performance coaching videos.

Our team of experienced presenters will be examining the benefits and drawbacks of both live-mix and post-mix production methods - which will be demonstrated through a live recording of musicians produced on the day.

Business & Legal

As well as the technical challenges, delegates will be taken through the business and legal aspects of recording performers and copyrighted material, dealing with contracts and release forms - as well as being given guidance on the Health & Safety issues of working in these environments.

How to shoot

Delegates will be shown how the set was rigged and taken through the benefits and features of the cables and connections in use. The importance of manual control over Focus and Exposure will also be covered, as well as the how you should match cameras shots by using correct colour balance, framing, composition, shot size and angles.

Dealing with audio

Particular attention will be given to the challenges of recording the soundtrack - with guidance provided on the use of mixers, choosing the right microphones, how to record in stereo, multi-track recording, handling line/mic-level and 3rd-party feeds and how to obtain the optimum recording levels without overloading.

Post Production

Delegates will be shown the benefits and requirements of recording live to PC as well as discussing the workflow required to ingest material via Solid State Media. The workshop will also cover the tools and processes used in improving music recordings in the edit suite and how to best synchronize sound and vision to assimilate live multi-camera recordings. Finally, delegates will be shown how to efficiently encode the programme for DVD and the Internet.



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