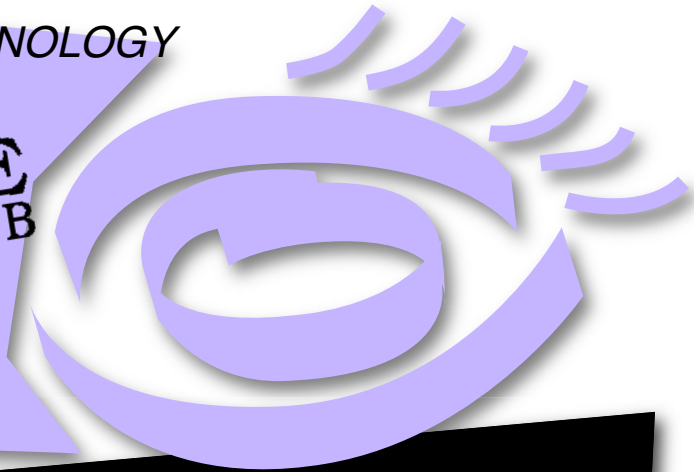


ENJOYING VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

**NORTHSIDE  
CAMCORDER CLUB**  
SYDNEY



# ELECTRONIC EYE

NEWSLETTER

2008

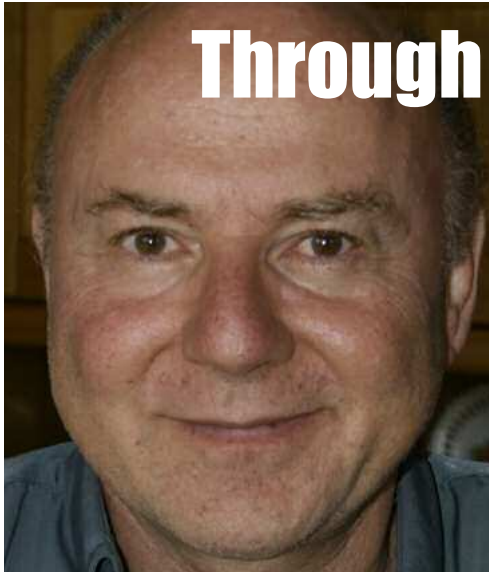
July 2008

- 2-3 Through the President's Lens
- 4-5 Three Mates
- 6-8 Video Storage
- 10-13 Digitising 8mm Movies
- 14-15 Editing and Pacing.
- 16-18 AGM Notice



Next Meeting  
**WEDNESDAY**  
23rd July

[www.ncc.asn.au](http://www.ncc.asn.au)



## Through **the President's Lens**

The winter weather did not hold back a massive attendance record at our July Focus Night. Over 30 people came to learn from Phil Brighton how he transfers 8mm film to digital video. A must for many of us who started our film career before 1980 – when video became available to the masses. His home made jig showed you don't have to spend thousands or even hundreds on the set up. But you do have to know how to overcome the problem of strobing due to a mismatch between the projector shutter frequency and the camera field frequency. Phil showed us how to adjust the projector to optimize the end result. Everyone there was impressed with Phil's work. He screened some of his film work from the South Africa of the 50's – so good was the quality we thought we were watching Newsreels from an International Media conglomerate.

What is surprising is that most of the attendees were non-members. People who saw our notices in the "What's On" column of the local newspapers. This method of promoting club activities is proving to be successful in find people who have an

interest in video. In this case a very strong interest in digitizing their old films. Hopefully some will be interested in the broader aspect of club benefits to join.

This coming Club night should be an interesting one which should help us better understand what makes a good video. Mike Elton our Competition Manager will take us through the competition evaluation process. In addition we will debate “What is a Music Video” This is of particular importance considering the difficulty in defining it.

Look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

*Peter Frybort,  
Club President*

# "Three Mates" by Chris Saville



Bob shouts out "More blood around the eye and ear"! Joy rushes forward with a bottle of artificial blood and places it carefully on the actor with a cotton bud. We are now ready for the next scene in the Northside Camcorder Club's latest short drama "Three Mates".

Three actors and eight crew members met early on a cold Sunday morning in a demountable classroom at Blakehurst High School to film - a few members the previous day had set up the lights and set.

But we are ahead of ourselves. How was the production first conceived? It all started at a club meeting when Andy Doldissen gave a talk about the different roles required when shooting a movie and how we should adopt them if we want to improve the overall quality of our video productions. He handed out cards with these different roles written on them to a few lucky(!!!??) people in the audience. Nothing then happened until about a month later when a voice said "When are we going to make this drama"? And then it all swung into action. The idea was to push people into these specific roles where they would learn from others and extend their skills. It required all selected to work as a team to produce the video.



The filming was done in High Definition and here we were lucky to have Kent Fry as cameraman as he owns a Sony HVRV1P which he brought along with his Sony HD playback machine. Bob Hallett the director knew the three male actors, with only one having had any experience of acting before. It was only a short drama and we had a whole day so the opportunity was





taken to film shots from all different angles with the lines repeated over and over again – the actors did an excellent job stayed in character right till the end.

The lighting was a problem. The scene was set close to a wall which caused large shadows - raising the lights overcame this but then gave less light onto the faces.

We also had to block out daylight which was done with a roll of plastic sheeting purchased at Reverse Garbage at Marrickville at a cost of \$10. (If you have never been there it's well worth a visit). The cut sheets were held up on the windows with gaffer tape, however later in the day they all seemed to want to fall off at the same time. The lighting person was kept rather busy!

Catering was provided by Margo Hallett in her usual professional way and she even very thoughtfully had a birthday cake for one of the actors whose birthday happened to be on that very Sunday.



It's now over to Rob Nercessian and Kent Fry to do the edit.

At the end of the day all agreed it was a great experience and a few even asked "when is the next one"? So if there are any scripts out there that need to be filmed .....!!





# Video Storage - Keeping the Old Current

by Ian Simpson

*This article has been reproduced with kind permission from Ian Simpson of the Wollongong Camera Club*



A prize photograph in my family collection is this mid-1890s image. Here staring out at me is my grandfather, his mother, father and siblings. The condition of this photograph belies its age of over 100 years. In one frozen moment it shows me where I have come from and in those frozen stares I can see how my past relatives looked in their Sunday best. Imagine if they had had the digital video technology we have today. No longer would there be the silent fixed moment in time, rather I would have had a colourful moving image of relatives talking in their Scottish tongue. Or would I?

How permanent are my modern digital images, both still and moving, and how readily will they be viewed in 100 years time? When I see the quality of this 100 year old photo I have the constant fear that all my efforts of capturing my family on video will be in vain as future generations will not be able view them.

Archivists for the electronic moving image material have recognised this problem for some time but have considered it to be in reality three problems. These are equipment obsolescence, media degradation and software availability. Let's look at these aspects for each of the storage mediums commonly used today. As far life expectancy of the various mediums go, the reality is no one really knows. Only assumptions, guesses and bad experiences colour the estimates I have quoted below.

## **Video Tape**

Up until recently this has been the storage medium we all have used. Up until recently the only choice I had was to store sound and images on video tape. But in a way this made life simple. If I wanted to store those memories for future reference, I just put the tape away in the cupboard and went out and bought a new tape for any new recordings. A survey of the internet suggests tapes should be good for 10 to 15 years. This seems a bit too conservative as I have tapes from 1989 that still seem OK. But there is always the knowledge that any magnetic tape medium will deteriorate over time. Images will become fuzzy and the colours will become distorted. Magnetic tapes also suffer from "print through" where magnetic information is transferred between adjacent layers of the tape. This is quite common in old audio tapes where on playback you can hear an "echo."

However, one saving grace of going to digital recording on tape is that the DV format has built-in error correction unlike analogue recordings. All those analogue recordings on Video 8, Hi 8, VHS and VHS-C tapes need to be transferred to a digital medium ASAP. This should be an important activity for any person with a collection of such tapes so as to minimise the losses simply due to the passage of time. This is also a matter of urgency as the transfer to the digital domain has to occur before the camcorder that was used to generate these analogue tapes stops working. Storage of video on a digital medium as (say) an AVI file seems quite OK today, but will it be readable in 100 years time?



### **Hard Disc Drives (HDD)**

Both in camcorders and in computers the current common way of storing video is on a Hard Disc Drive. The surprise for me when I researched on the internet was that a common service life for a HDD was 5 years. True, manufacturers quote numbers like 500,000 to 1 million hours MTBF but as I discovered these were very unrealistic estimates of HDD life. The true interpretation of a **Mean Time Between Failures** (MTBF) of 500,000 hours is as if you used a HDD for its service life then replaced it by another and used it for its service life and so on, then you would go (on average) for 57 years before you had a failure. But in those 57 years you would have gone through 11 HDDs and be onto your 12th HDD. Some suggest a better measure of the reliability of the HDD is the warranty period. A three year warranty may imply that the manufacturer considers a service life of 5 years but only expects a trouble free life of 3 years. A report in *the Australian* (May 18, 2008) of a survey done by researchers at the Carnegie Mellon University in 2007 indicated that failure rates of HDDs were typically between 2 and 4% with the worst up to 13%. Manufacturers of HDDs however claimed failure rates were only 0.88%.

The advantages of HDDs are obvious; high storage capacity; reasonable GB/\$; and the data is very accessible. One writer recommended powering up an Archive HDD every 3 months so as to check the bit error rate and quality of the disc content.

### **Optical Discs**

It is generally agreed that a home made DVD made on a good quality disc and stored at a fairly constant temperature and humidity should last at least 20 if not 50 years. What is also commonly agreed is that they are very prone to handling damage that can make them unplayable. Further with the development from CD to DVD to BluRay, although the discs may last 50 years the equipment to play them may not.



What file format to store video on these discs is also a very important question? If they are converted from the DV tape format to be stored as the MPEG-2 file format on the disc then there will be a loss of data which can not be recovered if in the future you want to re-edit the video. So storage on either DVD or BluRay discs should be as AVI files if future editing is anticipated. The problem with this option is less video is stored per GB as an AVI file and hence more storage capacity is required.

There is also the fear that discs will become unreadable, not because of surface damage, but because of changes in the dye layer or the polycarbonate layer of the home made discs. Although I have experienced many DVD discs that failed to play after being made or failed in the burn operation I have yet to experience any disc's failure to play after a time on the shelf. The addendum to this is when a disc won't play in one player but will in others. This is a different problem related to the player or format capability not the disc.

### **Solid State Memory**

Solid State Memory or Flash Cards or Memory Sticks; whatever they are called by different manufacturers, are the new storage medium. They claim to be faster and more stable than HDDs. At present they offer limited storage and higher cost per GB, but their rapid development indicates that they will be the answer to future storage needs. Although solid state memory devices have not been around long enough to get an estimate of their life expectancy, some commentators are quoting 10 years (ie., twice the life of a HDD).



So what did my research for the best video storage option tell me? Well in short not a lot. I gained no clarity, but gained a lot of confusion. I am confused because there are no clear answers either for the present or clear predictions for the future. There are only guesses for the future because the technology is changing so rapidly. Just 20 years ago I was happily shooting Super 8 Kodachrome film. Now I have hundreds of tapes filling a cupboard that in 1985 I could never have anticipated I would have in 2008.

All of this becomes even more confusing if I were to move to a High Definition camcorder with either a HDD or solid state memory as its storage medium. It would then become even more imperative that I find a suitable archival storage so that I could clear all the video that was clogging up my camcorder. So the following table is my best survey on how many hours of each recording medium can be stored on an archival HDD system of 1TB, 3TB and 5TB capacity.

Record Format	CODEC	Camcorder Record Medium	Bit Rate	1 Hour of video =	1TB of storage =	3TB of storage =	5 TB of storage =
SD	DV	Tape	25 Mbps	15 GB	66.67 hrs	200 hrs	333.33 hrs
HDV	MPEG-2	Tape	25 Mbps	15 GB	66.67 hrs	200 hrs	333.33 hrs
HD	AVCHD	HDD or Solid State Memory	15 Mbps	8 GB	125 hrs	375 hrs	625 hrs
HD	XDCAM MPEG-2	SxS Card	35 Mbps	19.2 GB	52 hrs	156.25 hrs	260.4 hrs
SD	MPEG-2	8 cm DVD	18 Mbps	8.4 GB	119 hrs	357 hrs	595 hrs
			12 Mbps	5.6 GB	178.8 hrs	535.7 hrs	892.8 hrs

If I wanted to store my videos on DVD or BluRay discs then follow table shows how much each disc could hold.

Record Format	CODEC	Camcorder Record Medium	Bit Rate	1 Hour of video =	DVD	BluRay	
					Single Layer holds	Single Layer holds	Dual Layer holds
SD	DV	Tape	25 Mbps	15 GB	19 mins.	1.67 hrs	3.3 hrs
HDV	MPEG-2	Tape	25 Mbps	15 GB	19 mins.	1.67 hrs	3.3 hrs
HD	AVCHD	HDD or Solid State Memory	15 Mbps	8 GB	35 mins.	3.125 hrs	6.25 hrs
HD	XDCAM MPEG-2	SxS Card	35 Mbps	19.2 GB	14.7 mins.	1.3 hrs	2.6 hrs
SD	MPEG-2	8 cm DVD	18 Mbps	8.4 GB	33.6 mins.	≈ 3 hrs	≈ 6 hrs
			12 Mbps	5.6 GB	50.4 mins.	4.45 hrs	8.9 hrs

What is the result of all this research? For any of my videos and digital photographs to be viewed in 100 years time it will require a lot of effort by each future generation. Each generation will need to transfer the video and images from the current technology to every newly developed technology. Thus there would need to be a member of each generation who takes on the role of custodian of the family's visual and aural history. All of this seems quite complex and demanding, almost as complex and demanding as each new technological development. Such requirements for each succeeding generation seem fraught with loss. All of this is so much more demanding than the slipping of a photo into a paper bag to be left in a suitcase until generations later it is re-discovered, and requires only a pair of eyes to view it.





Well the Club year is ripping along and here we are already at July. In the not too distant future we will be starting the detailed planning for our annual major event which takes place on **November 28th**. It is opportune to consider the format of VOTY and take on board any improvement suggestions from members.

The last couple of VOTYs have been reasonably successful and unless there is input to the contrary we are planning to use the same format for **VOTY 2008**. The following points for improvement were noted immediately after VOTY 2007.

- *Start a half hour earlier to allow more socialising at the start.*
- *Commence ticket sales in August and advertise the event more extensively to increase attendance numbers.*
- *Provide reduced quantity of same sort of finger food. We had to discard some last year.*

The Film Australia Theatre venue has served us well and is very appropriate for our event. The 2008 booking for the venue was secured in February this year so that we don't miss out.

Please think about VOTY, both from the point of view of preparing your entry and also from the point of view of event format. If you any suggestions to improve the format please let me know as soon as possible so that we have time to react and incorporate those improvement ideas.

*Ian Scott VP, VOTY Organiser.*

# DIGITISING YOUR OLD 8MM MOVIES

On July Focus Night one of our long standing members Phil Brighton gave us a hands on demonstration of the process he uses to recapture those old valuable film images onto magnetic tape.

The subject was of great interest to the audience many of whom obviously had enough “past experience” to have a library of valuable images on film which are well worth the effort of transferring onto modern magnetic media.

Phil brought his “rig” along to demonstrate the process right there on the spot. Now the rig does not have to look like a masterpiece of the joinery craft it just has to be strong and firm. Phil’s rig met all those criteria and it worked a treat.



Phil’s notes on the transfer process and rig construction are included at the end of this article and the article photographs show enough detail for anyone to copy the set up and have a go by themselves.

Phil lived for many years in South Africa and he used some very interesting film taken at a tribal gathering in what was originally Zululand to demonstrate the process of transfer. We were able to compare the before and after results.

The finished result was very good with almost no loss of image quality or “flicker”, well done Phil.

Phil was also active in a filmmaker club in South Africa and after a bit of encouragement he agreed to entertain us with some of the club short films. As is Phil’s style the films were of comical genre (content not to be taken too seriously) and delightfully entertaining.

Well done Phil thanks for a very entertaining and useful presentation.





# NOTES ON COPYING TO TAPE FROM 8MM FILM

1 Ensure that the film to be copied is in good condition for screening; i.e. free from breaks in the perforations and all splices secure.

2 Lubricate the film to assist its passage through the projector. This will also clean the film at the same time.

3 See that the projector is 'warmed-up' before attempting transfer. This will make speed regulation easier.

4 The projection screen should have a clean white non-glossy flat surface. I use a sheet of A4 copy paper, I have also used white blotting paper with good results.



## Items Required:

1 A variable speed projector with a three bladed shutter

2 A spray can of lubricant, 'Mr Sheen' furniture polish seems to work well.

3 A pair of film rewinds. Preferably with one of them geared-up.

4 Pass the film around a revolving drum of at least beer can size after lubrication to extend the length of film loop in air and thus allow lubricant air drying time.

5 Your video camera with a suitable mounting bracket. I tend to leave the setting on 'Auto', not everyone's choice, in any case you can experiment with your own set up. If your camera has an external mike jack you can insert a blank plug to mute the on board mike and avoid picking up the annoying projector noise.

6 A solid board on which to rigidly mount the various items. The one that I use is about one and a half metres long by half a metre wide.

7 Clean hands and a degree of patience!

## Some general notes on the actual operation:

A three bladed shutter is required in the projector in order to get a closer match of the film 'flicker' to that of the tape transport. It will be found that quite a small variation in projector speed will be required to match the frame speed of the camera.

If possible, a fairly long leader could be attached to the film in order to assess and adjust the speed of the projector before the “good stuff” arrives on screen.

Be warned, this is no time to be inattentive! The speed of the projector has to be monitored at all times.

It is quite important that the ambient light be kept as low as possible during the actual transfer operation. The less light the better. Black is good!

Keep a torch handy during the transfer, an occasional flash at the projector to ensure that all is going well is very reassuring. 200ft of film on the floor at the end of your labours is rather off-putting.

Give it a go. If nothing else it will keep you off the streets!





## Editing and Pacing

This brief article introduces the topic for the August Club Meeting. When we watch the work of members we are constantly asking ourselves the question – does this interest me, or is it grabbing my attention. Is it enjoyable and/or interesting to watch.

The answer to those questions does not necessarily depend on the topic. Much of what we see may not necessarily be something we are interested in, yet we watch with interest because it has a certain quality that holds our interest for a certain time.

That elusive quality of the video may be based on:

Creation of mood lighting, shot from an unusual perspective, display of emotion, absorbing music and visuals, fascinating story etc.

Where that quality is absent, we may get bored. I believe the biggest culprit is poor pacing. The change of scenes is not quick enough to hold our attention. Many of our holiday videos suffer from this problem I believe. Simply adding music does not make it more interesting. Of course the commentary can do a lot to pull a borderline video up.

Here's an extract I found on the net that writes about the importance of an attention grabbing opening to a video.

## Opening your video: How not to lose viewers

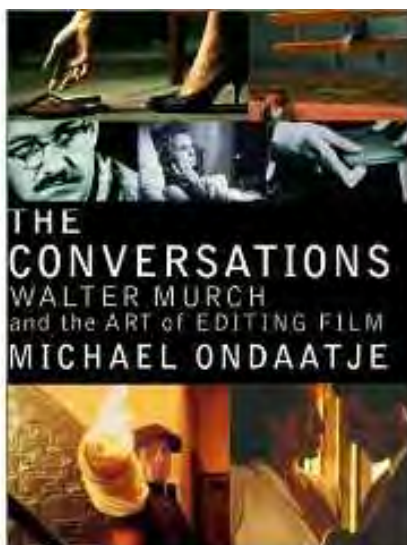
*By Colin Mulvany*

<http://masteringmultimedia.wordpress.com/2008/06/25/opening-your-video-how-not-to-lose-viewers/>

*Finding a good opening to your video is critical. Far too often, newspaper produced video fails to quickly grab the viewer's attention. Online viewers are a fickle bunch, where the click of a mouse button will lead them to some other cooler destination. The key is to smack 'em on the head and wake them up. Your first 15 seconds better be good or they won't stick around long. Here are some of the things I do to let the viewer know that my video is worth watching:*

- *I avoid at all costs, opening with a talking head. That is the kiss of death. You have to warm the viewing crowd up some before you bring in narrative. Use strong visuals from your b-roll instead.*
- *One of my favorite things to start my video with is a series of quick sound bites interspersed with natural sound pops. A natural sound pop is a quick hit of sound like a ball hitting a bat, the sound of a shovel digging into a sand pile, the closing of a car door.*
- *Try using the classic literary device of opening your video by teasing with the middle or end of your story.*
- *One of the suggestions I learned at the Platypus Workshop is to lead with your strongest, or second strongest video first. Works great in breaking news videos.*
- *It's important to define your story in the opening 15-20 seconds. If viewers have to wait too long they'll be gone. If needed, use objective (facts) narration to move the story along.*
- *Or...don't define the story quickly. Instead make your opening vague and mysterious. But be careful with this. Don't try the viewer's patience or they'll bolt.*
- *Open with great natural sound. I sometimes open my video with black and just play sound. It's mysterious and hopefully makes the viewer want to follow the sound into your story.*
- *Finally, look at picking up the pace to capture the viewer's attention. Long (five seconds or more) clips won't stimulate the viewer's brains—especially the ones with ADHD.*

Here's a reference for you to follow up on. A book written by one of the best movie editors, Walter Murch.



THE CONVERSATIONS: WALTER MURCH AND THE ART OF EDITING FILM, by Michael Ondaatje

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the beginning of Club Night on Wednesday 24 September, 2008 at Dougherty Centre, Chatswood.

Members are asked to participate in two major processes:

- Election of officers;
- Proposals that will improve the running of the club.

### Election of Officers

All positions will be declared vacant and nomination of candidates is sought. Please note that under the Club's existing rules, the President and Vice-President may only bear office for two years. Both the incumbents, Peter Frybort and Ian Scott, have served for two years and cannot stand for those positions again this year.

The positions vacant are:

President	Vice President
Secretary	Treasurer
Training Officer	Publicity Officer
Editor, Electronic Eye	Membership Secretary
Librarian	Competitions Manager
Legal Officer	

Three members for assisting roles

Please send your nominations to the Secretary, Kent Fry ([secretary@ncc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@ncc.asn.au)) by 4 August 2008.

### Proposals

There are presently two proposals that will go to the AGM:

- Club name change
- Change of time period for President and Vice President.

## **Club name change**

It is felt that the present name is not indicative of the area that the club serves, and this is borne out by the number of members who live outside the “Northside” geographic area. In order to make the name more inclusive, and perhaps encourage membership from further afield, it will be proposed that the name of the club be changed to one of:

- Sydney Video Makers Club, Inc;
- Sydney Amateur Video Makers Club, Inc.

If you have any suggestions, please send them to the Secretary, Kent Fry ([secretary@ncc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@ncc.asn.au)) by 4 August 2008. The committee will consider all names provided and put forward a single name in a proposal for the AGM.

## **Officers' Period**

Under present rules, President and Vice President may only serve for two years. It will be proposed that this be extended to 3 years at the AGM.

If you have any comment on this proposal, please advise the Secretary, Kent Fry at [secretary@ncc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@ncc.asn.au) by 4 August 2008.

Should you wish to put forward any other proposal, please forward it, together with your name and that of a seconder, to the Secretary, Kent Fry at [secretary@ncc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@ncc.asn.au) by 4 August 2008.

Kent Fry

Secretary

*The club's AGM will be held as part of the September Club Night. The final agenda will be published in the August edition of Electronic Eye. The draft agenda for the meeting is:*

## **Agenda of Northside Camcorder Club Annual General Meeting - Draft**

To be held during the September NCC club night meeting on 24 of September 2007

1. Call to Order

The President to establish that there is a quorum of members present.

2. Previous minutes

2.1 Corrections: A copy of the previous minutes will be posted on the notice board, and corrections if any, to be sought.

- 2.2 Acceptance:

- 2.3 Business arising

3. President's report

4. Treasurer's report

5. General Business

Proposals that reach the Secretary by Tuesday 4 August 2008 may be included here. No proposals from the floor will be entertained.

6. Election of Officers and Management Committee for 2008/09

The chairman will declare all Committee positions vacant, and will call for nominations to the following positions.

President	Vice President
Secretary	Treasurer
Training Officer	Publicity Officer
Editor, Electronic Eye	Membership Secretary
Librarian	Competitions Manager
Legal Officer	Other Ordinary members (up to a further three)

Note that no additional business may be raised from the floor during the meeting.

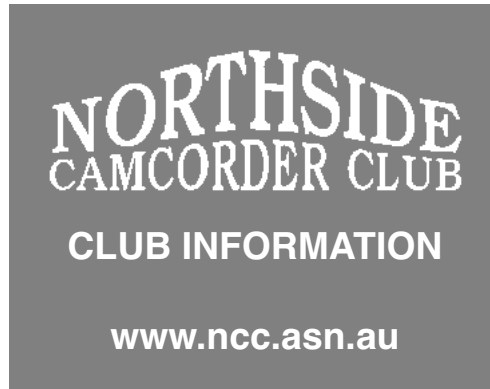


# CLUB CONTACT DETAILS

President	<i>Peter Frybort</i>	9960 4456
Vice President	<i>Ian Scott</i>	9484 4439
Secretary	<i>Kent Fry</i>	<a href="mailto:secretary@ncc.asn.au">secretary@ncc.asn.au</a>
Treasurer	<i>Elvio Favalessa</i>	9415 2634
Membership Secretary	<i>Glenn Booth</i>	9401 6677
Training Officer	<i>Joy Saunders</i>	
VOTY Organiser	<i>Ian Scott</i>	9484 4439
Publicity Officer	<i>Rob Nercessian</i>	<a href="mailto:robnccl@hotmail.com">robnccl@hotmail</a>
Editor Electronic Eye	<i>Terry Brett</i>	9451 1851 <a href="mailto:editor@ncc.asn.au">editor@ncc.asn.au</a>
Web Master	<i>Eric Chung</i>	
Service Desk Manager	<i>Peter Deklerk</i>	8920 0795
Help Desk Coordinator	<i>Eddie Hanham</i>	9327 4118
Librarian	<i>John Maher</i>	
Visitors Host	<i>Ron Cooper</i>	9982 1147
Competition Manger	<i>Mike Elton</i>	9904 6295
Copyright Registrar	<i>Jim Whitehead</i>	9416 7162
Video Director	<i>Terry Brett</i>	9451 1851
Audio Director	<i>Garry Murdoch</i>	9807 3706
Catering	<i>Bob &amp; Margo Hallett</i>	9587 6925

**Please address all correspondence for Committee Action to:**

The Secretary,  
Northside Camcorder Club,  
P. O. Box 1185  
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057



**President:**  
Peter Frybort

**Vice President:**  
Ian Scott

**Secretary:**  
Kent Fry

**Treasurer:**  
Elvio Favalessa

The Club meets on the ***FOURTH WEDNESDAY*** of each month (except for November & December) at 8PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood. Tea & Coffee are available from 7PM.

FOCUS nights, which usually cover technical subjects, are held on the ***SECOND TUESDAY*** of each month (except January & December) at 7.30PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood.

The Committee meets on the ***FIRST WEDNESDAY*** of each month. Members are always welcome to attend, and for meeting time and venue, see any committee member.

**Member's guests may be invited to meetings; the first visit is free, subsequent visits are \$5. New members are always welcome. Annual membership is single \$56, self and spouse \$76, country member \$28 - with an initial joining fee of \$10.**

Note: Equipment brought to a Club night is not covered by the Club's insurance. Members should study their household insurance and check whether their video equipment is covered away from their premises and consider whether their cover should be extended.

All articles in the "Electronic Eye" magazine are copyright. Reproduction is allowed by other video clubs providing both author and The Northside Camcorder Club are acknowledged.

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