"I Give You a Toast to the Pioneers!" The *Movie Maker* Ten Best Video Competition 1982–1983

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Pioneers

The purpose of this chapter is to broadly survey the key issues surrounding new video practice, creativity, and aesthetics for British amateur cinematographers of the early 1980s through examining one of the first video competitions in the United Kingdom. Announced in 1982, the *Movie Maker* Ten Best Video Competition 1982–1983 emerges in British amateur media culture sitting between profound shifts in analog and digital equipment. The competition's historical importance arises from its underreported nature, representing the diffusion and use of early video equipment in the mainstream UK amateur cine publication *Movie Maker* and its affiliated competition, the Ten Best (Rose 1982, 248–49). Perceptions of anxiety surround the rise of home video technologies however, and the competition, its initial reporting, as well as the entries themselves give testament to contestations over this "new" technology.

This anxiety surrounding the competition can be further defined into specific concerns: consumer discomfort over the arrival of video, its impact on a "cine-traditional" discipline, and its integration into an already existent type of amateur media practice. Retrospective evaluations of the competition's historical importance also indicate a "preservation anxiety," with the competition sitting between the Institute of Amateur Cinematography's own Film and Video Library and the East Anglian Screen Archive. These "video-movies" are on the periphery of the archive and they exemplify the unfortunate economic limit of the sector, as well as the denigrated status of early video formats (Martin

2005; Hetrick 2001). The entries and their reporting therefore present a series of acute critical, cultural, and technological issues for research.

During the early 1980s, domestic amateur video equipment neared a general level of affordability in the UK, but this was just one factor in the shift away from traditional forms of amateur film practice. For a few commentators, the UK cine scene of the 1970s and 1980s was plagued with a growing sense of disinterest locally and internationally from companies, such as *Norris* and *Eumig*, involved in the production of amateur film technology: "Most people were glad to say goodbye and good riddance to 1981, a year of recession, redundancies, bankruptcies and urban unrest. It was a pretty bleak year for amateur movie-making too, with a sharp drop in sales of cine equipment, aggravated by the rapid growth of video as well as the economic climate. Companies large and small went out of business, and when Eumig went bust in Vienna, it seemed as though the writing was on the wall. Cine's days were outnumbered" (Watson 1982, 282).

Such reporting indexes a transitory period in the cine movement, with video equipment's domestication a market response to dwindling cine equipment sales. The state of the market at the time was, in contrast to journal reports of "industry death," not entirely unprofitable (Watson 1984, 7; "Cine a £15 million-a-year UK Market" 1982, 14). Sales of cine equipment had been decreasing since the late 1960s however, and combined with a poor economic climate, the manufacturing shift toward video was a route of escape from the stagnation of the market. Dissident voices mocked the movement toward video, but the economic benefits of the development were evident (Watson 1984, 8). Also, the shift to video systems was visible within parallel professional developments reported a few years earlier in the *British Kinematograph Sound and Television Journal* with technical "simplicity" being a key facet of this "video" development (Harris 1977, 77).

"Simplicity" would be a crucial cause of the cine movement's apprehension around video however, with the video industry perceived to be simplifying equipment in favor of the domestic and family user. The innovation being offered by microprocessor and microcomputer technology was both practical and economically sound by making the equipment smaller, less specialized and easier to use. This could be problematic for those with more creative intent and aspiration: "Do you ever pine for the days when we had a few things ourselves? Older readers will recall that, once upon a time, a light meter was an essential accessory. You had to measure distances or make a good judgement. If having done most of it yourself, you got a good result, the old ego expanded and you felt you were into a wonderful hobby. Not so now. The electronics have taken over. Anyone can do it. Thank goodness they haven't yet devised an electronic script writer" (Watson 1982, 283).

Such comments from cine journalists index larger concerns around liberal notions of western individualism and the impact of technology on consumers' agency and creative control. Cine enthusiasts' anxiety of video stemmed from the fear that the "democratizing" technology would undermine a traditional and conservative type of practice sustained through both pre- and post-war periods. This reluctance around video was a trend that continued through the decade: "One senses a growing unease over the direction the amateur film is taking and the threat posed by video" (Malthouse 1989, 33). Certain writers also expressed concerns about commercial interests "muscling in" on the amateur scene, and tensions between consumer and manufacturers were not only evident, but significant: "Film and camera manufacturers are out for a mass market, and if that market shows signs of stagnation—as it must be—then out they will come with a new idea and equipment to keep the tills ringing. It's not your artistic ability they are interested in, only your money. That's business and progress" ("Video Take Over" 1979, 16).

These initial projections of video's negative impact on amateur filmmaking, characterize much of the early discourse and discussion around video in the UK amateur cine movement: "There's a five-letter word going the rounds of cine circles at the moment; the pundits smile knowingly, the purists throw up their hands in horror and the novices just get confused. No prizes for guessing—the word is of course VIDEO" ("Video" 1980, 49).

Despite this, one of the first national amateur video competitions is announced in the April 1982 issue of *Movie Maker*: the Ten Best Video Competition. In its inauguration, rhetoric around the competition appears to carefully balance the introduction of this new video technology, with notions of traditional film creativity. As Tony Rose (1982), then managing editor of *Movie Maker* stated, while video technology was materially different to cine cameras, the process of producing and editing movies for a video competition, the "film-language" or technique used to construct a narrative, would remain unchanged and static: "The deployment of long-shots, medium-shots and close-ups to tell a story or expand an idea will remain the same. The use of parallel cutting to show simultaneous events taking place in different locations will remain the same, as will the use of lighting and music to convey atmosphere. Not even the punctuation marks—the fades and dissolves are going to change" (248–49).

Rose was explicit in legitimizing the competition, with appeals to tradition appearing to negotiate readership carefully: "The inauguration of the video competition is not just an attempt to be trendy and it is certainly not a denigration of film" (1982, 248–49). Regardless of this, there were still a range of practical reasons that restricted a dual competition featuring both cine and video entries:

> So why, you may ask, should we have a separate competition on video? The
> answer lies in the nature of the end product. A film, by its nature, is designed to
> be shown to a large audience and half the point of the Ten Best Films contest is

that it brings winning films before an audience of thousands, the initial

screenings taking place in the impressive auditorium of the National Film

Theatre. A video tape, by its nature, is designed to be shown to a small audience

in a domestic setting—and the few attempts at large screen video presentations

I've seen tend to confirm rather than deny this. (Rose 1982, 248–49)

Parallel to this call for "budding video enthusiasts," Rose commented on potential entries for the new competition tentatively, with expectations of quality appearing distant and unlikely: "To judge from the few amateur-produced videotapes we have chanced to see so far, the art is in its infancy" (1982, 248–49). It is therefore astonishing when, in the February 1983 issue of *Movie Maker* introducing the winners of the competition, Rose (1983) states: "When I introduced the competition in our April 1982 issue, I struck a slightly sceptical note by mentioning that we did not expect the number of entries to be vast or their quality to be outstanding. My forecast has proved to be half right" (78). While the majority of entries adhered to initial expectations, other material proved to oppose many of the then-current attitudes to video: "Somehow, their producers have all managed to overcome the handicaps that we tend to think of as inherent in video. They are edited, for example, quite as fluently as well made films and without any noticeable sacrifice of picture quality—a reminder, if it were needed, that there are no technical problems in the world that can't be conquered by creative ingenuity" (Rose 1983, 78).

Initial accounts of video had placed it in opposition to film and film-practice, but the *Movie Maker* competition counters many of these early attitudes. There are, as Rose makes clear, limitations to the initial three-way video technology (portable packs consisting of camera, recording device, and battery pack), such as projection and editing, but it is possible to overcome these through "creative ingenuity."

The initial reporting and announcement of the *Movie Maker* video competition 1982/3 place it between broadly traditional and modern conceptions of amateur video equipment. The competition marks the diffusion of early, and considerably bulky, three-way video systems; and this use in amateur productions would be prior to the release of smaller camcorders and cheaper video technology in the mid-1980s. The competition, therefore, exemplifies the potential and limitations of the new medium, while also being a measure of the success of the technology for amateurs. While prior reporting of the competition was marked by hesitation around video, there were occasional attempts to offer a humorous negotiation of the competing and "contested" voices: "On the one hand there are the baleful head-shakings of the 'cine-is-dead-brigade' and the blandishments of the video hype merchants, and on the other the confident claims by the dedicated cineastes that film is the only way to do it if you want to finish up with anything worthwhile" (Cleave 1983, 61).

The *Movie Maker* Ten Best Video Competition 1982-1983

Judged by *Movie Maker* staff, the competition had five winners and, as stated by Rose (1982) in his opening speech, the competition "is a significant milestone in the history of amateur movie-making and video" (248–49). Earlier questions had been raised in the journal as to why the Ten Best was not open to video, with "the present state of video technology" not being favorable for large-scale projection (248–49). Video was not rejected outright, as anecdotal reports predicted, and attempts such as this competition were made to integrate it into established patterns of behavior and creativity. As two of the winning competition entries—*Hong Kong* and *Civic Week*—will exemplify, practice would stay incredibly familiar and, to quote the end of Rose's introduction, "video and film would indeed progress hand in hand" (*The Movie Maker Ten Best Video Competition* 1983).

***Hong Kong*: A Memorable and Established Experience**

This first winning entry, *Hong Kong*, can be broadly characterized in the holiday and travel film genre: an already established amateur film category. Heather Norris Nicholson, a social historian working on pre-, inter-, and post-war cine material, has stated that amateur holiday and travel films occupy an "intriguing position" within traditions of travel representation, extending historically established links between tourism, photo-mechanical technology (both moving and still), and memory (2009, 93). Nicholson's argument will be echoed, with *Hong Kong* defined as a video production that has predominantly remained with the formal, aesthetic, and generic characteristics of the 1930s cine material she discusses. This video, arguably, continues the visual motifs and themes associated with early amateur travel film and its connection to memory and tourism. While emulating the conventions of the cine material, it is not identical; and there are occasions where the possibilities and practicalities of a distinct video aesthetic arise.

Produced by Stephen King of Wilmslow, Cheshire, *Hong Kong* was shot using a U-Matic camera, the JVC KY1900, and a Sony 4800S recorder. King chose to shoot *Hong Kong* on the U-Matic format, stating that his reason for selecting the format was because it "had the advantages of quality reproduction, ease of editing and adding soundtrack" (Rose 1983, 80). Unlike other prize winners, King had no previous history of involvement in the amateur cine movement or participation in a regional club. He had worked as a professional still photographer, and at the time of the competition had been in advertising for "a number of years" (80). As a result of being involved in professional photography, it was reported in *Movie Maker* that King had become increasingly interested in moviemaking (78). Having previously planned a trip to the Far East, King had thought that *Hong Kong* would make an "interesting topic" for a documentary-type production (78).

Discussing King's entry, *Movie Maker* reported that he found it "essential to plan his shooting schedule in advance," so that no time was wasted in Hong Kong, indicating the considerable planning and energy put into production (Rose 1983, 78). King also researched the culture thoroughly, which helped him to select shots before going (78). Upon returning from the holiday, King cataloged all his shots, which amounted to two and a half hours of material, and began editing on a JVC editing suite (78). Having completed most of the work and organization prior to shooting, King stated that the tape came together with only a few corrections being necessary (78). This editing efficiency was a consequence of the nonlinear editing offered by the professional JVC suite. Nonlinear editing was a significant move away from traditional analog methods and, importantly, allowed a nondestructive editing process on original source material.

In discussing the movie, King said that he was quite pleased with the "way the tape turned out" and producing it had taught him extensively about location shooting (Rose 1983, 78). After entering *Hong Kong* in the competition, several commercial sponsors contacted King wanting to use the video for marketing. He and *Hong Kong* remain an "anomaly" in light of this "commercial interest," with a distinction between his work and that of the cine-clubs. His professional identity and employment in professional photography evidently sets King apart from the "amateur/professional distinction" inherent in cine-clubs and other enthusiasts of the time. The commercial interest in his film then indicates differing motivations and self-identification with a "perceived" moviemaking community (78).

The movie starts with a video title; in an exotic font, the words "Hong Kong" are repeated vertically in six rows as the camera pulls away. A slow panning shot from right to left of Hong Kong's skyline begins. The movie commentary, read by the producer's wife, describes the skyline: "Hong Kong's famous skyline hardly needs any introduction to the world at large, it symbolizes the wealth of a western way of life mixed with the mystery and

excitement of the far-east" (*Hong Kong* 1982). This opening shot and commentary set one of the film's main themes and problematize Hong Kong as a stereotypical, cultural, and economic meeting point of East and West. It is a theme that is reiterated throughout the rest of the documentary. Cutting to a medium shot of a traditional Chinese junk vessel sailing down the harbor channel, the camera follows the boat through the water as other vehicles cross in and out of the picture at varying speeds and rhythms. "This first classic view of the waterfront shows the contrast between modern living and the traditional Chinese way of live on the junk. The theme of the old and new, which is repeated time and time again in Hong Kong. The junks move in and out amongst hydrofoils, cargo ships, speedboats and yachts in this one of the world's busiest channels" (*Hong Kong* 1982).

Emphasis is then turned to a boat journeying toward Hong Kong island with the scene being shot from the vessel. The stationary shot from the boat captures the rhythm of the water, as the camera is transported into the city. The video then moves to night shots of different cooking stalls. This section features one of the most interesting and unexpected visual "effects" with the lights of the cooking stalls creating an intensive reddening of the image. After discussing the food, we are taken to the neon-filled night scenes of the city: "At night the signs are illuminated and light up the city in a blaze of color. Some are very intricate and artistic, all are advertising their goods or services" (*Hong Kong* 1982). *Hong Kong* finishes with a section on the floating Jumbo restaurant: a culinary house with its own jetty. The camera, once again, takes the trip across the jetty before closing on a symmetrical and balanced shot of the restaurant from across the water. With this shot and narration, the video entry ends. In this summarizing comment, the relationship Nicholson outlines in earlier amateur travel films between tourism, memory, and image is visible, beside the evident "promotional" intent of the production commentary: "Hong Kong: a most memorable experience and this is just one of the many treasured memories that you will take

home with you. There is no other place like it in the world and we hope you have a good holiday" (*Hong Kong* 1982).

Hong Kong resonates with the 1925 to 1950 material that Nicholson examined (2009) in the North West Film Archive and Yorkshire Film Archive, characterized by an excess of continuity with traditional amateur travel representations. Consequently, this video entry is only pioneering in its use of new equipment, rather than creating a novel viewing experience. Prior conventions of the travel film can be viewed quite clearly in the imposition of narrative structure onto *Hong Kong*. Nicholson, when discussing the holiday film, writes of how there are varying degrees of narrative, with a common feature being the inclusion of the start and end of a journey: "Not surprisingly, holiday films involving a journey often start and finish their narratives with scenes of departure and arrival . . . the tendency to include opening scenes of half-packed bags, leaving the house, and even details of the journey to a destination, indicate more considered attempts to structure narrative" (2009, 93).

While King and his wife do not feature in *Hong Kong*, and there are no scenes of departure and arrival, the content of the video is excessively structured. By mimicking the journey into Hong Kong, a tourist perspective is constructed and presented as an experiential window, eliciting the perspective or gaze of being there. The linear temporality of *Hong Kong* also assists in creating an experience of day and night. *Hong Kong's* "visual journey" can all be considered effects of King's imposition of structure onto the footage. This element of storytelling indicates King's comprehensive understanding of the aesthetics associated with narrative structure and form. With his knowledge of still photography and a career in advertising, it is easy to conclude that King would be visually literate with these types of motifs. The narrative structure of *Hong Kong*, along with King's extensive planning and preproduction, position it within the kind of serious practice associated with earlier forms of amateur travel, as recognized by Nicholson (2009). She identifies how British amateur travel

films (from 1925 to 1950) demonstrated advanced formal characteristics and narratives despite being "home movies" (93–127). *Hong Kong* continues this combination of advanced form, narrative, and "serious leisure," used to distinguish the much earlier filmic practice (Stebbins 1977, 582–606).

The inclusion of particular journeys, such as the harbor and Jumbo ride, add an ellipsis to the narrative that is in keeping with the technical ability of older amateur travel material. *Movie Maker*, when discussing the entry, reported that: "*Hong Kong* has the look of a glossy commercial but it's given a touch of the amateur (not amateurish) informality by the commentary which is spoken with infectious enthusiasm by the producer's wife. Quite a model, this, for all makers of holiday travelogues" (Rose 1983, 81). The near professional quality of the movie would appear to be bound up in the exhibition intention of the entry. The absence of the couple from their own holiday film is also connected to this facet: its intended function as promotional material. This entry is not a family holiday film, but a well-executed and consciously planned attempt at a travel documentary.

Production notes from the movie hint at significant practical difficulties concerning the weight of the U-Matic equipment. Humor is even made of the fact, with it stated in Rose's introduction that King should get an award for "just" carrying the equipment. It is evident that issues of weight and bulk still plagued early video technology, even for creatives with serious intent. Particular aesthetics of video technology do begin to benefit the image, such as the excessive burning of red and green color sections. This adds illumination to the evening shots of Hong Kong's neon signs, tantalizing the viewer in the latter part of the movie: "The picture quality is superb throughout, notably in some glowing night scenes" (Rose 1983, 81). However, aside from aesthetic benefits, *Hong Kong* features representations that, though praised in *Movie Maker*, are inherently problematic: "*Hong Kong*, of course, is the documentary and an excellent one of its kind. Colourful, entertaining and non-

controversial, it tells us what the inquisitive tourist, rather than the political student would want to know" (Rose 1983, 81).

Congratulated for its apolitical tone, the assumption by the competition judges is that *Hong Kong* succeeds because of its apparent neutrality. However, in its theme of the "inquisitive tourist" the movie avoids issues of social inequality, overhousing, nationality, and colonialism. In positioning the video toward promotion and tourism, it follows a well-tread colonial path and gaze. Fallacies surrounding the exoticism and mystery of the East are as intrinsically controversial as the "political student." The colony's political and social issues are sidetracked in keeping with the promotional and exhibition agenda of the film.

Hong Kong and the travel genre it represents stay well within the realms of previous cine production, exhibiting formal and aesthetics traits familiar to 8 mm versions of the entry. Local detail and reporting are the focus of the movie, with the material providing significant historical description and explanation of expansive local phenomenon. *Hong Kong* does reiterate a series of ideological issues, however, regarding colonialism, nationality, and representation, which ironically allow it to establish continuity with previous filmic forms of the genre. *Hong Kong*'s tone, while informative, subjugates the very buildings, people, and items it tries to represent. Combined with its commercial aspects, the video unfortunately parallels Nicholson's argument about holiday films fifty years prior: "Such material may subsequently provide a wealth of socio-cultural, economic and historical 'evidence,' albeit mediated through the organising optics of the cinematic gaze, and the always inherently politicised process of representing other localities and lifestyles" (2009, 94).

Hong Kong while successful in both "amateur" and "professional" terms, still carried elements of the Eurocentric, conservative, and wealthy past from which such leisure activities emerge. While *Hong Kong* represents the professional emulation that

certain amateurs aspired to, the next entry indicates something of the opposite: an "authentic" expression of locality.

Civic Week: Posterity and Local Custom

Civic Week charts a local event, also titled _"Civic Week,"_ in the small Northern Irish town of Ballyclare, Country Antrim. It is arguable that _Civic Week_, while made on video equipment, is a continuation of the amateur posterity production form. Its content and style echo John Grierson's 1949 appeal to amateur moviemakers in _Amateur Cine World_, for a civic form of amateurism: "This is a challenge to all of you as local citizens. General information from a national point of view does not fill gaps. It is up to the local amateur cinematographer to play his part and provide a local information service. You have great power in your hands" (Grierson in Malthouse 1949, 151).

Similar in form to earlier amateur films documenting public celebrations, _Civic Week_ is concerned primarily with the recording of the community unmediated. It was produced by Archie Reid, a senior teacher who had been making amateur films since university (Rose 1983, 80). Having worked on 16 mm, standard, and Super8 mm, video was a natural continuation of already established leisure patterns. Reid was well known within the amateur scene, being the winner of three "Ten Best" cine trophies, with _Journey into Russia_ (1969), _Inherit the Earth_ (1969), and _Other Days around Me_ (1973). These cine competitions were a template for the later "Ten Best" video competition. In addition to local competitions, Reid was also successful in international competitions (Rose 1983, 80). He was made a fellow of the Institute of Amateur Cinematography (IAC) in 1982 and had written for a variety of the amateur publications, such as _Movie Maker_, _Film Making_ and _Amateur Film Maker_. In contrast to King, Reid was an already involved member of the cine movement prior to entering the competition. He started using video technology in 1982 for educational purposes

in his school: "In many ways it's like starting with 8 mm all over again, inventing ways to lift off, and replace sound, remembering to fill the frames with close-ups, cutting on action" (Rose 1983, 80).

Civic Week was shot on a Panasonic 3030 camera and edited on a Panasonic 3000 and 7000 recorder. This was, as Rose says when introducing Civic Week, "strictly amateur equipment" and quite different in quality from the industrial and commercial format of U-Matic. Footage from over forty events was shot during one week in Ballyclare. The final edit was an attempt to create a collage of images, colors, and sounds to represent the "full week in a few minutes" (Rose 1983, 80). One of the problems, noted by Reid, in using domestic video for editing is that the method he uses (source material copied from one recorder input to another master recorder) loses quality due to the duplication process: "With 8 mm it was fighting the quality loss as the pictures are enlarged, with video as they are copied. I enjoy the ability to watch the effects on the screen as I cut, but find tape is as vulnerable as film. One slip of the finger and instead of wiping sound to dub in commentary—the precious original picture can be erased" (Rose 1983, 80). Unlike the nonlinear editing enabled by the U-Matic equipment in Hong Kong, Reid had to edit the Civic Week footage in a linear fashion from one recorder playing the source material to a master tape being recorded on another device. There were significant differences in the possibilities offered by just "strictly" amateur editing equipment.

The video begins with an emblem of Ballyclare Civic Week, with the logo "Industria et Probitate," Latin for "By Work and Integrity," the motto of this Irish community. A voice-over from Reid then begins while we see images of a marching band: "To the rest of the world Ulster may seem a place of violence and bitterness but to those of us that live here there is another image. These are the people of one small community coming together to enjoy themselves in a week in May. These are the images and sounds of Civic Week in

Ballyclare" (*Civic Week* 1982). The movie focuses on people of varying ages enjoying themselves. Much of the pleasure of the film comes from the footage's unmediated quality, giving the viewer a sense of intimate access to this event and community. Shots of the motorcycle racing event, which run through the film, act as a point of connection in the video entry.

Later scenes focus on dancing, a daycare center for young babies, elderly couples singing, and fancy dress. Several games are also filmed, such as musical chairs. *Civic Week* ends with a closing commentary from Reid where he says: "For seven days in May one Ulster community has found time to remember the happier things in life" (*Civic Week* 1982). The film presents an intimate "inside" view of Ballyclare, while also preserving the event for national memory. It represents the kind of civic amateurism Grierson discusses, and in doing so integrates the diffusion of truly amateur video equipment alongside the formal and civic discourses of prior cine practice (Grierson in Malthouse 1949, 151).

Civic Week, while well received, faced criticism from one competition judge for its quick succession of shots: "Bernard Ashby, the professional film editor on our panel, said that many of the shots were just a bit too short for his taste" (Rose 1983, 82). The quick pace of the shots is one of *Civic Week*'s strengths and provides the viewer with an immersive experience of the event that feeds into the civic discourses of the production. The "vividness and freshness" offered by the amateur cinematographer in 1949 is no different to the qualities that *Civic Week* presents with its accelerated editing: "So it was not surprising that those early films should have been vivid and sincere, even though they might have lacked the glossy veneer of later productions" (Malthouse 1948, 502). Compared to *Hong Kong*, *Civic Week* certainly lacks the glossy commercial aesthetic of King's production, but its emphasis as a local record with its own visual style of fast editing, quick close-ups, an excess of coverage, non-narrative, and simplicity attribute it with both value and historical continuity. *Movie*

Maker described it in similarly positive tones: "A brisk no-nonsense record of a local event, made with all the pace and 'attack' that we've long associated with Archie Reid's films. The change to tape has certainly not affected his style" (Rose 1983, 82).

Civic Week, like *Hong Kong*, stays within a familiar amateur tradition of recording and preserving local customs, events, and community but lacks the professional emulation of *Hong Kong*. Considering intended functions and exhibition circumstances however, such differences are evidently related to these divergent aims. *Hong Kong* is promotional and *Civic Week* is a local record. In spite of divergent aims, both winning entries present familiar amateur forms, continuing the travelogue and posterity production genres rather than departing from them.

Contrary to some of the concern reported at the start of this chapter around the demise of amateur cine practice, video's integration into already established patterns of cine production was relatively unproblematic (Mee 1982, 3). Certain issues are highlighted by the selection of two nonfictional documentaries. First, at this point in time only industrial and commercial equipment such as the U-Matic was offering nonlinear editing. The advantages of this can be seen in *Hong Kong*'s editing, which was completed on JVC suites achieving professional results. Linear editing was not an unsurpassable obstacle however, and Reid evidences efficient use of the duplication method. Regardless of this, linear editing was visibly of a much poorer quality, and the difference in U-Matic and VHS formats is evident. The second issue is production time. While preproduction was generally the same as if using film, shooting schedules on video were significantly shorter, with some of the entries being shot in three to five days. The cost of one entry on film (16 mm), at £2000, also indexes the economic and cost benefits of early video. On a practical level, the benefits of video can also be viewed in terms of performance. With the ability to instantly play back, actors are capable of honing and refining performances for the first time in amateur productions, as opposed to

waiting for rushes, or film processing, which could take days. This kind of advantage is demonstrated well in the winning fictional short of the competition, *One of Them Picture Things* by Peter Wilson, in which the acting is significantly enhanced by the ability to instantly rewatch performances from actors (Rose 1983, 80). *Movie Maker* would go onto emphasize in its afterthoughts that four out of the five winners had learned their craft on film but was less than sympathetic to the runners-up: "It would perhaps be merciful not to dwell on these tapes that didn't make the grade" (Rose 1983, 82–83).

In conclusion, the *Movie Maker* video competition was innovative in UK moving-image history, but notions of it being truly pioneering are dampened by its adherence to the conventions of previous amateur film production codes. Certain discourses and voices criticizing the then video equipment's picture quality and weight are most likely confirmed by the competition, especially if one looks at the qualitative difference between U-Matic, Beta, and VHS entries. The competition entries do overcome these difficulties, and if editing is used as an example, in very ingenious ways. The winning video entries, then, promote the ideas present in Rose's introductory speech emphasizing that content was far more significant than medium in the evaluation of amateur texts. The competition does showcase the possibilities of video for the amateur movement, indicating that similar results are more than possible with equipment that, like earlier post-war equipment, had been considered "substandard." A host of interesting aesthetic effects emerges from the video entries, but the reporting of these nuances, such as the "burning" of colors in the nighttime scenes of *Hong Kong*, are considered mistakes, as opposed to new creative effects.

In contrast to comments at the start of this article, video would not cause the demise of the UK cine movement, and, as is evidenced by the competition, it was supplementing already existent amateur film forms and practices rather than supplanting it. While video had caused initial fear and anxiety, particularly in the threat it posed to more conservative

historical notions of amateur filmmaking, much of the technologies' dissemination into amateur spheres saw it retain strikingly similar form, genre, and aesthetics. In this sense the introduction of a new technology did not significantly alter the cultural and social shape of Western bourgeois amateur filmmaking, but provided instead new expressive possibilities that were soon taken up by "inquisitive tourists" and enthusiasts of the "happier things in life."

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