

Moorfoot Community Films (part of Temple Community Cinema)

Making a community film was what then led us onto setting up a community cinema.

Background to the Community

Temple is a village which has a very historic and diverse past, the name derives from the famous military order of the Knights Templar who had their Scottish base here between the 12th and early 14th centuries and is about 6 miles from Roslin, and the famous Rosslyn Chapel.

In recent years the village of Temple had suffered a blow with the local village school closing in 2007. Temple Nursery & Playgroup was still running in the Village Hall, but because the new school, 5 miles away, was to have a nursery, the outlook was bleak for Temple Nursery too. The school had been a real community hub, not only providing education, but also a meeting point for villagers, it was used to host the village fete, villagers were invited to Burns Suppers, plays and presentations (and could use the photocopier for a small fee!) so its loss was keenly felt. The Village Hall Association had been greatly involved in the battle to keep the school and once it was finally closed we saw that the Village Hall HAD to become the focal point again.

Beginnings

Summer 2009 - The Wicker Tree (Robin Hardy's follow up to his original Wicker Man) was being filmed in the local area. Watching this filming inspired Jackie Gibb to come up with a script and knowing that he enjoyed video editing she then asked Iain Hyslop if he would like to film and edit the movie. He was very happy to do so, and now had an excuse to replace his 10 year old camcorder with a newer model!

From the beginning we were keen to get the whole community (the villages of Temple, Carrington & North Middleton) involved in the filming and our goal was to show it in a glamorous 'Premiere' in Temple Village Hall. Any profits that were made from this film and premiere were to be split between the Temple Nursery, Village Hall Association and the newly formed community cinema group (eventually around £1200 profit was made). Apart from galvanising community involvement in Temple, residents of nearby farming communities and neighbouring villages were brought together

Filming took place from July 2009 through to January 2010 and over 200 local people took part in some way. Over 50 people, of all ages, even learnt a dance routine for the end credits which was filmed in Temple Old Kirk yard. The local community were generous in allowing use of amongst other things, a farmhouse converted into a B&B, a vaulted cellar with a mysterious dog statue, gardens, pets and motorbikes. Temple Nursery children and staff and the local primary school also got involved, portraying a day in the life of a werewolf child.

Red Carpet Premiere! - The film 'The Undiscovered' was premiered in Temple Village Hall on 6th March 2010 (luckily in a fine weather break between the snows that year) and the community turned up in style for a red carpet event! (and again for a matinee the next day). The stars arrived by 'limo' to be met by the 'paparazzi' and adoring fans and red carpet interviews were included on the final DVD. In addition to the 'main attraction', the occasion also included a short film A Wolf's Tale,

an exhibition with photographs, art and props from the filming, and a reading of the poem 'Changing Time' written specially for the project by local poet Ken Angus. A DVD of the film has been released including several additional short films about the project.

Result! - This first project certainly helped us all acquire some new skills: persuasion, encouraging cooperation, marketing and entrepreneurial skills developed as well as the filming, sound and directing skills that were involved. We were featured in the Midlothian Advertiser, Edinburgh Evening News and local radio (which nominated us for a community award), as well as producing our own website.

Ongoing

This first success has inspired others to write scripts and develop projects:

- We are currently filming the next feature, provisionally entitled 'Short Cuts' with the aim of premiering in late 2011. The script writer was involved in the dance scene in our first film and was keen to get more involved in the actual film-making process this time. This has been a larger project, involving many more scenes and actors and the school again. One result of this was that a neighbour who could not make any of the filming times had heard that we were interested in trying out some green screen effects and he, being a member of Midlothian Camera Club, arranged for and helped us to use their studio's green screen so we can have some special 'flying' effects.
- The latter stages of filming have been greatly enhanced by new sound recording equipment that was bought after we successfully applied for a £1,000 grant from the Scottish & Southern Energy/Moorfoot Community Council. This has then allowed several people to learn how to use the sound equipment, thus giving them new skills and enthusiasm for the film process.
- The remainder of the grant will be used to purchase our own green screen and animation software, with the ultimate aim of running animation workshops.

Future Plans:

- The head teacher of Moorfoot Primary School in North Middleton (where children from Temple and Carrington now attend school) is very excited about our community filming and has asked us to assist with a filming project that the whole school will be undertaking in the autumn 2011 term – this will involve facilitating videoing and editing and to develop their skills in animation etc.
- Children have (without prompting!) written scripts and asked whether we can help to film their ideas. Because of this we plan to hold workshops to make short films/animations that will be shown before the main features at our community cinema nights.
- A 'Village census' which would gather all the usual census information, supplemented by interviews with villagers documenting their lives and history of the houses.
- Another idea was inspired by the recent BBC Radio 4 programme – A History of the World in 100 Objects. The plan is to ask people to think about an object, a person – anything that reminds them of Temple or the surrounding area where they live, or have a

connection with. Participants would be filmed talking about their 'object', or if shy, someone can talk on their behalf. An event will be held where the short films could be shown, or 'live' presentations filmed for posterity. DVDs could then be produced for sale and the originator of the idea would like half of the proceeds to go towards an Alzheimer's charity.

Benefits

The benefits that have come from these projects are many:

They have brought together local people of all ages – created links between young and old that did not exist previously.

Temple Nursery & Playgroup is still running 4 years after its death was predicted – perhaps not entirely due to our filmmaking activities or £500 donation but we stay involved with them, recently filming their play and graduation using our new sound recording equipment. They will go on to sell this on DVD to parents as a fund raiser.

Has invigorated the Village Hall Association, which recently finished a major refurbishment of the village hall, taking into account lighting, acoustics and underground cabling for film work.

Have brought out skills that were previously hidden – dancing, singing, poetry, prop making, acting, painting.

Involvement in making the films has led to more interest in coming along to screenings at Temple Community Cinema, and lively discussion often follows, comparing the acting skills and conditions of those on the 'big' screen with the experience of our volunteer actors and extras!

Many of the children involved are between the ages of 5-12 and 'being in a movie' or coming up with scripts is something that they have now grown up with and see it as a natural part of life! They are our future!

Coline Hyslop

4th August 2011