

Dear Graham,

I would like to say thank you to you and the GTC for my Dick Hibberd Award, I'm thrilled to be the recipient of this and it's an honour to be recognised by my fellow professionals.

As you probably know Dick was a cameraman at ATV Elstree many years ago, this was the company where I started my career and I met Dick on a couple of occasions at camera department reunions.

When I look back over the 40 years plus, I realise how lucky I have been to have worked on Studio Drama, Light Entertainment, Situation Comedy, Quiz shows, Electronic News Gathering, Live Theatre capture for Cinema, Operas for the Cinema from several Opera Houses, reality shows from Fiji and Borneo, music shows in Vegas, World Cups in football and rugby to give just a few examples. My career has taken me all over the world and I have had the pleasure of working alongside foreign camera teams, engineers and production, it can be challenging working in different cultures but never the less, very rewarding.

I have been very fortunate to enjoy the company of many fellow professionals along the way - Producers and Directors who have given me the opportunity to travel the globe and be involved in some very exciting projects.

When I started at ATV one of the many good things I learnt was the crew system and the essence of being part of a team, this has helped me so much during my career because a good crew is a fundamental part of a successful production. Cameras are only part of the much bigger picture; they can be the largest department on the studio floor but still only one cog in the huge wheel that is Multicamera production.

Working alongside these other crews such as Sound, Lighting, Props, Scenery and of course the gallery is incredibly special when it all comes together, particularly when we are Live.

I have made many friends over the years and this is probably as a result of that teamwork and the bond that ties us whilst working so closely, sometimes it can be stressful but we always get through and can have a laugh and a beer at the end of the day.

One of those many special friendships is Simon Staffurth who I was a junior cameraman with at Elstree and TVS, he then went onto become a very successful Director and has given me the chance to work on some very prestigious jobs. We have worked together on the opening and closing ceremony of the Olympics in Brazil, South Korea and Japan, we were also part of the production team for the funerals of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and Her Majesty the Queen.

Last year Simon was asked to direct the Coronation of King Charles III at Westminster Abbey, with 39 cameras and a brilliant team and we were able to achieve something very special. I was extremely honoured to be the Camera Supervisor on this historical event knowing it would have a huge global audience.

Back in 2008 Sir Nick Hytner wanted to film Live Theatre for cinemas to be broadcast worldwide, he approached Robin Lough to direct the very first production from the Lyttelton Theatre on the South Bank.

The brief was - "to give the audience the best seat in the house without being in the house"

Nick didn't want the cameras at the rear of the auditorium on long lenses, which had been the norm - he wanted to get the cameras closer, on tracks, use cranes or whatever to make it work.

We weren't making a film but capturing a Live piece of Theatre, an interesting hybrid.

My colleague and friend David Gopsill, who was also a junior cameraman at ATV, and I had long discussions with Robin on how to achieve this.

The kit available was mostly Film Dollies but with limited ability to offer the height range of the Vinten Studio Dolly - the solution was to use a tracking base that you could sit the OB Hawk into, you could track, crane up and down and offer various camera angles to enhance the performance.

We had a Jimmy Jib, two tracking peds and three other fixed cameras - NT Live had arrived, it was a production of Phedre starring Helen Mirren and Dominic Cooper.

The compromise of using the Hawks on the tracking bases meant the minimum height was quite high, it worked but it needed some thought going forward.

I was invited to lunch with David Fader and Tim Highmoor from the camerastore who were old mates and both accomplished camera operators. We could see that this kind of work could expand and over that fun lunch we came up with some ideas about how to get a Studio Dolly that could track with a large Box Lens, The Skquattro Dolly was born.

Now we had a piece of kit that was flexible in all sorts of situations, it can be used on track or in a static base when there isn't a reliable Studio floor to take a Dolly, I can't thank David and Tim enough for their support in this idea.

When I look back at some of the moments from the many productions, they all have different memories, Filming the Sea King Helicopters landing on the M1 after the Kegworth Air Crash, the Crowning of King Charles III, the close up of the Duke of Edinburgh's hat and gloves on his carriage, Filming undercover outside Crossmaglen with a Nightcam, the close up of David Beckham just before he took that penalty against Argentina, running down a Sand Spit in the South China Sea whilst carrying a jimmy Jib and keeping out of shot whilst the Helicopter filmed the burning effigy on Survivor, getting inside the Big Brother House on the final of Big Brother One, tracking around Adrian Lester and Rory Kinnear whilst filming Othello at the National Theatre and many, many more.

As you can see, I've been very fortunate to have been in some amazing situations over the years but if I had to choose one skill that I'm very proud of, it's operating a Vinten Pedestal in the Studio. This is where it all began and my enthusiasm for doing a Multi Camera Sitcom, LE or Live Theatre production is still as strong as ever, my passion for getting that shot on the end of a 95:1, Remote Tracking Dolly or Crane is still there - but the joy of pushing the Dalek around the floor and the ability to crane up, track in, crab left or right is so thrilling, Oh, I forgot to mention the framing, lens angle and focus!

I think I can honestly say that my enthusiasm is the same now as it's always been, it probably is the best job in the world and my passion for that image has not diminished over all this time.

Apologies to all of those crew whose shoulder I have looked over and said the famous Paul Freeman line "can I make a suggestion"!

Once again, a huge thanks to you Graham and the GTC committee.

All the very best.

Paul