



Golden Ponds and Brackish Water

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Keith Massey

The GTC underlined its commitment to young cameramen with its support for the third Bill Vinten GTC University Awards. Held on 15th October at the University of the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham, (which is proud of its reputation of producing award winning alumni over many years), the evening gave the opportunity for established cameramen to meet students and celebrate the high standard of work being currently produced in this country's universities.

GTC Chairman, Keith Massey, acted as the evening's host and began by introducing the Vice Chancellor of UCA, Professor Simon Ofield-Kerr who said, "What is so good about these awards for us is how the vision and that focus on camera craft is in tune with the philosophy of the university." He underlined the University's commitment to teaching a good foundation in craft skills, completely in line with the GTC's aims and the criteria for judging these Awards. Next to speak was last year's winner, Vince Knight, who had graduated from the University of Bournemouth, and is currently working as a freelance director



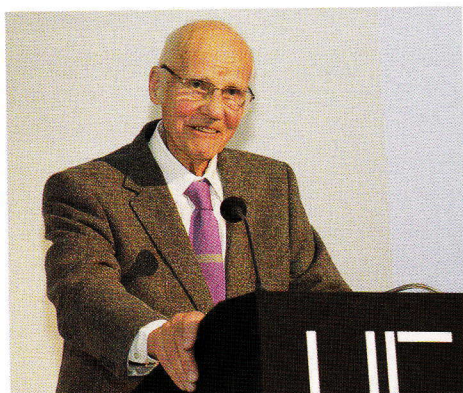
Awards winners left to right: James Matthews; Mark Bond Bournemouth University; Angus Mitchell; Billy Williams BSC OBE; and Lawrence Fish

of photography. He talked about ways in which new graduates could bring themselves to the attention of potential employers and gain commissions, and how he had built-up his showreel balancing work in film, drama and commercials. Knight said "I love my job and the unknown. I have no real certainty for the future but that's all part of the risk and thrill." Knight also spoke about the dilemma of having to work for free, but was able to build contacts that have resulted in paid work later on.

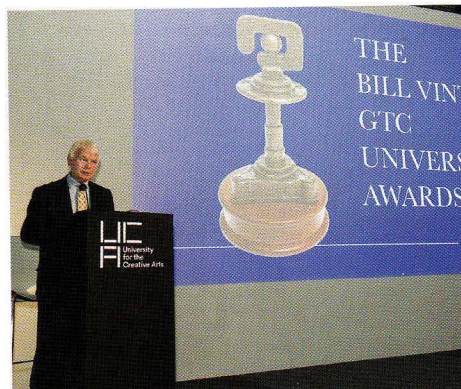
Billy Williams BSC OBE was then introduced as the key-note speaker. Mr Williams, won an Oscar for *Gandhi* in 1982, and learned a lot from his father who started work as a cameraman in 1908. Billy showed a picture of himself from 1937, aged eight, with his father's Vinten camera. He spoke about his career in cinematography which started as an apprentice cameraman, moving on to being an RAF photographer during World War II, and then filming for Pathe.

His post war career in training and promotional films and later commercials brought him to the attention of directors Ken Russell and John Schlesinger. This led to him being the cinematographer on a number of films including *Women in Love* and *On Golden Pond*. He was nominated for Best Cinematographer Oscar for both these films. Mr Williams offered amusing anecdotes from his work with cinema greats, and underlined his life-time commitment, learning at any early age to look after equipment, especially in inhospitable environments.

After the key note speech, Keith Massey showed a selection of entries in this year's competition. He said, "These entries show the stunning contribution of the next generation of TV and cinema cameramen and women from our universities. The industry, it would seem, will be in good hands in the future." Keith also commented on the use of crowdsourcing to pay for specific equipment and actors, which the judges felt had enhanced the films.



Key-note speaker Billy Williams BSC OBE



Host GTC Chairman Keith Massey



2014 winner Vince Knight

UNIVERSITY AWARDS



Overall winner Angus Mitchell of Bournemouth University presented by Billy Williams BSC OBE



Runner-up James Matthews of the Northern Film School presented by Jean Hibberd



Runner-up Lawrence Fish of the University of Portsmouth presented by GTC judge Anna Carrington

The two runners up were announced: Lawrence Fish of the University of Portsmouth for his film *Automated Teller Man*, and James Matthews of the Northern Film School for *Mako*. Lawrence has already taken his work experience – paid for by the Television and Video Camera Craft Educational Trust – with the Doctors production team saying, “It’s been awesome to experience fast-paced drama,” and has been invited back. James is currently travelling in Vietnam and Australia and taking the opportunity to do some ‘adventure filming’. He’ll take his work experience on his return early next year.

The overall winner was Angus Mitchell of Bournemouth University for *Brackish Water*. Commenting on the winning film, Keith Massey said, “This is first class and exceptionally executed.” Angus was presented with his award by Billy Williams and said, “It is an absolute honour to have won, particularly as there was such a variety of strong films submitted.” Asked about the filming of his winning entry Angus said that the logistical aspects of filming had proved the most challenging, especially as he had only four days to shoot in three different locations across the country. His long-term ambition is to be a freelance director of photography working on features. He’s now based in London as a freelance cameraman, establishing his career which he began whilst an undergraduate. He said, “There is such a good crossover between the quality of TV and film nowadays that it allows talent to work between the two disciplines.” Angus has already met DoP Martin Hawkins at Pinewood for work experience during the recording of *Still Open All Hours*.

It was obviously a good year for Bournemouth University, as Bournemouth

won the Bill Vinten GTC University Trophy. Mark Bond, lecturer in cinematography and who teaches on the undergraduate and post graduate productions said, “After a career in the industry I wanted to give something back to education and I get great satisfaction in teaching camera skills.” Commenting on the winning entry he said “Angus is very aware of space, pacing and composition. He has a great understanding of the characters and is very sympathetic and sensitive.”

The judges of this year’s competition were particularly complimentary about the standard of entries. Anna Carrington, who works as a freelance director of photography and camera operator said “There was some really good drama work this year.” Former Chairman, David Ballantyne, said “I was surprised, as a judge, just how good some of the entries were. Obviously, some showed a lack of experience and indeed skill, but those who have won awards tonight show a remarkable degree of ability and organisation, and it bodes well for the future. There’s a lot of talk about how it was better in the old days, which is based on the depth of training people in my day received from the traditional broadcasters, but there is undoubted talent out there which needs to be nurtured.”

At the end of the evening, Stuart McKears, Chairman of the Television and Video



Stuart McKears, Chairman of the Television and Video Camera Craft Educational Trust presents the University Award to Mark Bond of Bournemouth University

Camera Craft Educational Trust which support the competition and finance the work experience awards said “It was very good of UCA to host our event and it was wonderful to see old and new faces here talking to each other. As usual, the standard was very good, but we would like to see more documentaries entered as the purpose of establishing the awards was to increase awareness of the many diverse camera craft skills needed in professional television.”

It was with great sadness that, just a few weeks after the awards ceremony, the GTC heard of the death, at the age of 95, of Bill Vinten. It was Bill who wanted to help Stuart McKears financially in his quest to set up a university awards scheme to encourage young cameramen and women on university courses.

There is a tribute to Bill on page 18.