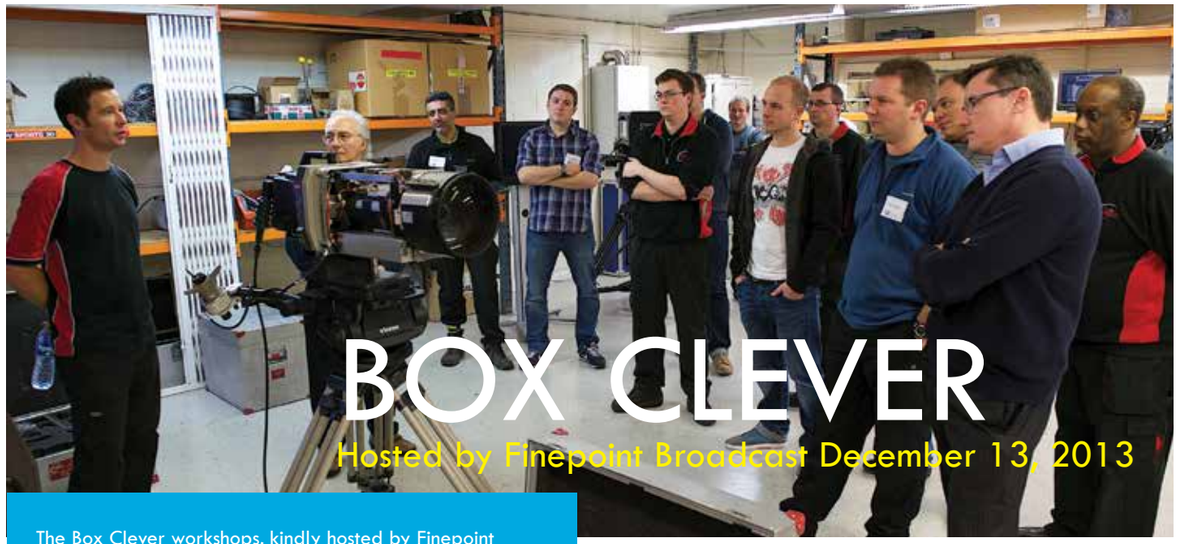
GTC WORKSHOPS

BOX CLEVER • SHOOTING OUTSIDE THE BOX • FINAL CUT PRO X

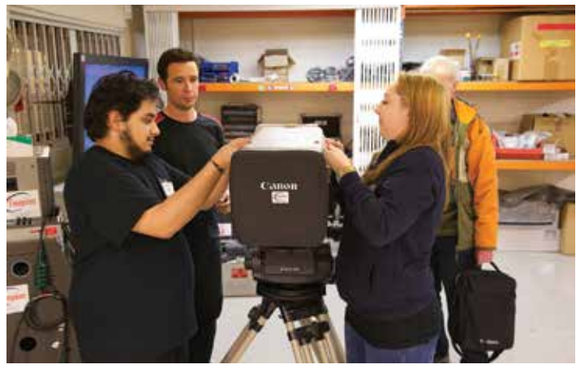


BOX CLEVER

Hosted by Finepoint Broadcast December 13, 2013

The Box Clever workshops, kindly hosted by Finepoint Broadcast, covered rigging box lenses safely, OLED viewfinder set-up, 'mega' lenses on little cameras, and large sensor cameras for OBs. Andrew McKenzie, Finepoint's Chief Engineer, and Neil Thompson, ex-Sony Video Engineer, were on hand to demonstrate and pass on their own hints and tips

WORDS: AHMED HASHIM



As part of my career development and learning process, I always try to attend workshops the GTC generously organise for their members. One of the benefits I get from attending these workshops is meeting other GTC members who have been in the industry for a long time. The Box Clever workshop, held at Finepoint Broadcast, was different to other workshops I have attended in both content and presentation. Being held at a hire company, a variety of cameras and lenses were on display which gave attendees the opportunity to experience them. The workshop focused mainly on Outside Broadcast, covering large sensor cameras and how they can be used for OBs.

A very interesting part of the workshop was learning how to rig a box lens. I have always wondered what was inside those boxes and we were shown that during this session. It is advisable that this task is carried out by two people, and considering the cost of these lenses that sounds wise. On this session, a good and clear demonstration of rigging a box lens was done, which started with safety being the first key, with tips to avoid certain common issues during this process. The demonstration also included stripping down the box lens and looking inside it. Chief Engineer Andrew McKenzie who presented the session kindly handed out some leaflets illustrating a safe practice for rigging box lenses. Do large-sensor cameras get your attention? Well, using these cameras for OBs with big lenses will make your focusing even trickier. Hence, Neil Thompson, ex-Sony Video Engineer, presented Sony's HDVF-EL75 OLED viewfinder which seems to be the perfect piece for the job. Neil demonstrated the features on this viewfinder and how to set it up. Perhaps one of the unique features of this viewfinder is the Knee function, which corrects the image on the viewfinder when shooting against overexposed backgrounds. The correction, however, only applies to the viewfinder and does not affect the recorded or transmitted image. An example Neil gave where the Knee function would come useful was when trying to locate a golf ball in a cloudy sky. Another useful feature on this monitor is the magnification function. The first time I came across this function was on a DSLR and ever since I have wondered why video cameras do not have them. I believe this is a very useful feature which gives the camera operator the chance to check their focus during a shot when it is not possible to zoom in to do so. Back to large-sensor cameras, Neil says they are going to be used in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil along with a variety of box lenses as well as other PL telephoto zoom lenses such as the Fujinon 75-400mm. The Sony F-55 sounds like it would be the choice of camera on those events for its ability to produce a live 4K output unlike the Sony F-5. It is believed that the move from HD to 4K would be similar to the initial advancement from SD to HD. Whether we are going to see 4K lenses is something not clear yet, however, Neil believes that the new box lenses are very good for the current technology. In order to use the Sony F-55 with a box lens, a 2/3" to Super 35 adaptor like the Abakus 260 converter would be required. It is arguable whether using an adaptor would affect the picture, however Neil confirms that the depth of field would stay the same. He added that using the adaptor would make the lens slower by taking out 2 ½ stops of light. As Super 35 cameras cannot communicate to box lenses; the lenses would have to be powered externally and the iris controlled using an RCP.

At the end of the workshop, we had the opportunity to check out some of the equipment at Finepoint Broadcast. Part of this was looking at some high-speed cameras which they usually supply for sports coverage. These cameras are the Sony HDC-3300R and HDC-2500 working along with a powerful recorder, the EVS XT3. The Sony HDC-3300R is capable of capturing footage at three times the normal speed in 1920x1080, while the HDC-2500 can do double speed. The EVS XT3 is a media server which works with a large variety of codes and has the ability for replaying in slow motion as well as live editing. It is worth mentioning that it can record up to eight HD channels using loop recording, whilst allowing access to media at the same time.