



# Colchester Film Makers Newsletter



## 2024 Season with Creative Group Challenges

CFM Members have spoken and the committee has listened!

We are thrilled to launch our new club website [colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](http://colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk) Please take a look around and use it as a helpful resource to see what is coming up each week. The dedicated programme page lists all 36 meetings and will be updated throughout the year if anything changes along the way.

To help encourage others along, as well as raise a little money for the club, we have also introduced some non-member nights at £3 on the door, for visitors to come and join us for our **Expert Speaker Nights** and **Film Screenings**. We have some three-week group challenges that allow potential new members to join in with a team and shadow experienced members.

### NEW FILMS

We have a creative season ahead for new film making!

### NEW SOCIALS

A new club project of shorts, stylised and branded by CFM!

### NEW APPROACH

New website, new emails, new payment options!



### Programme

The committee are excited to launch 2024 season plans!



### Promotion

How can you help raise the profile of the club and get more films made?



### YouTube

A new archive of CFM films is in the works and will be launched on our channel along with two new club series in 2025!

## Programme Update

### Respecting tradition with an upgraded mindset.

Club competitions have been a staple at CFM but in recent years, with a much smaller core membership, our members have often focused on making films outside of this criteria. We have many group film projects on the go, keeping us busy. With this in mind, we are hosting two Open Film Screenings (10th Dec & 20th May) where members can enter any completed films.

Members can still enter individual films to be enjoyed by their peers, while we develop working as a group, creating interesting and useful films and media content for the community of Colchester.

We are introducing some new 3-week Film Projects with differing purposes.

Week 1 - Planning  
Week 2 - Filming  
Week 3 - Editing



These events are going to be publicised to local colleges and on our socials to encourage new members along to take part. They can be used as trial experience sessions but we hope some will stay and join us when they see the value and space for creativity that we offer.

## MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

There is no increase in our annual membership which remains at £100 when paid up front. We are however, introducing a monthly payment option for those who would prefer a smaller outgoing at only £10 a month. This is reduced to £5 for students and under 25's. The treasurer has emailed around already with the usual options, you can also learn more and even pay by visiting the new website.

We are also introducing **Donation Members** for independent producers or others who require the club's help with their filming projects.



The first five episodes of the series (started last season) **Colchester in the 2020's** will be launched on our YouTube and socials summer 2025.

**Episode 1** features **Carrie Ransom** and we have an exclusive pre-screening happening at **The Headgate Theatre, Colchester on Monday 7th October**, with celebrity guests and endorsements! A group of us will be in attendance to film this event, with highlights from the event being added to the episode before its main release next year.

We are also introducing **'Portraits of Colchester'** a new club series of shorts produced by the club to be shared regularly on our social media. Promoting positive opinions of the City and raising our profile at the same time.



## Colchester Film Makers Bursary Fund

The CFM committee have discussed using a small portion of our funds, as a bursary for film makers who otherwise could not afford to join our membership but would still like to become a full member.

Challenges Officer Andy Merz has also offered to pay one full membership, thank you Andy.

This way of sponsoring new film makers will help us grow and bring new creative minds into our meetings so we can make even more interesting and diverse films.

If you would like to also sponsor a new member, or add to the bursary fund for future funding, make the treasurer aware or purchase an additional membership through the [new website](#). Thank you for your support.

### CONTACT DETAILS

In line with keeping our branding consistent please be aware we will be moving forwards with the following contact email addresses:

**Chairperson** - Leigh Martyn Thomas:  
[chair@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](mailto:chair@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk)

**Treasurer** - Peter Silk:  
[treasurer@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk)

**Challenges Officer**- Andy Merz:  
[challenges@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](mailto:challenges@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk)

**Secretary** - Gethin Thomas:  
[secretary@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk)

**Member Rep** - Neil Rowe:  
[memberrep@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk](mailto:memberrep@colchesterfilmmakers.co.uk)



Donations to the club fund of any amount can be made here:

[paypal.me/colchesterfilmmakers](https://paypal.me/colchesterfilmmakers)



For group messages to reach all members, we have a main Colchester Film Makers WhatsApp group for swift contact with the membership.

We also use WhatsApp groups for individual film projects such as Return to Earth, BITN and generally for Mersea Movie Makers which runs all Tuesdays during our summer break.

As new film projects are added to the CFM project calendar, labelled WhatsApp groups will be created for the team members to be kept informed. **IMPORTANT NOTE** from October 2024 any [cfmc.org.uk](http://cfmc.org.uk) emails will no longer function.

## Return To Earth

### Scorching Heat for August Shoot by Mersea Movie Makers

For those who aren't aware of the project, it is a short film first imagined and pitched to CFM by our very own HenThePen and is paying homage to Ray Harryhausen's work including *Mysterious Island* (1961), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and *Clash of the Titans* (1981). Much like *Mysterious Island*, this production is also set on an island and also involves a large beastie. However it is sprinkled with a smorgasbord of steampunk and distinctly British trappings with four colourful characters.

Pre-production was fun with several script revisions, along with the rest of pre-production demands, such as finding the actors, agreeing the costumes and getting various props made. We had many meetings with our actors and production crew to ensure we were fully prepared for the day.

Filming took place on Saturday 17th August and brought with it some unexpected challenges on the day. Sadly, one of our actors had his motorbike become dangerous to drive en route for our 9am call time and in the end Andy bravely stepped in as he couldn't get recovered and reach us in time for filming.



Crew included Barrie Gibbard, Peter Silk, Neil Rowe, Marcel Glover, Hamidou Boubekeur & Glory Ramazani - Cast comprises our very own Andy Merz & Al Croft along with steampunk enthusiast actors Christina Jane and Paul Adams.

It was also the hottest day of the year but thankfully with the help of our supportive crew and helpers bringing us water and ice, we got through it, with a fair amount of sweat and sunburn!

We were really pleased to welcome Hamidou and Glory on to the team and look forward to working with them on more projects at CFM.

After we wrap'd, we celebrated with a lovely meal and drinks at Mersea Barns.

We hope to show you all some good progress when we reconvene in September. Cheers.

Neil Rowe.

## Liferaft Films Update

John Groslin and the production team of *Beacon in the Night* would like to thank all those who participated in the making of their promotional video this summer.

Several CFM members took part, contributing their efforts and services in a host of pre-production and filming activities - from set design and construction, casting, audio recording, logistics, location scouting, risk assessments, H&S, costumes, make-up, catering, transport, logo design and a myriad of other activities.

This was a gargantuan task and a very challenging one. Memories abound of balmy days in Spring in glorious Suffolk villages, dragging a 3m dinghy across 2 miles of pristine sand, battling the swell of the tide, pumping wisps of mist into the church in Dedham as a bedraggled haunted woman stumbles in, dodging the droplets of rain in the forest as a terrifying soldier hurtled through the woods ... memories that will remain engraved on our collective consciousness.

At every stage, Colchester Film Makers showed themselves equal to the task of working most effectively alongside top professionals from the film industry. They spared no effort in giving of their very best at all times.

Location shooting took place in Colchester, Dedham Church, Stoke-by-Nayland, Brookhill Woods in Kesgrave, and near Lowestoft. Two shoots: 4 days in early May and 3 days in July.



Director/Writer of *Beacon in the Night* John Groslin on location May 2024.



CFM Members Gethin and Al with John the Steadicam Man.  
Make up Artists Emily Rayner-Airey & Chiara Mallardo with Actor Zachary James.

Once we have a finished, “saleable” product, we shall be doing the rounds of production companies and sponsors in the UK and on the continent to try and attract funding, support and the infrastructure needed for a major feature film. If this experience has taught me anything at all it is that you need a proper organisation behind such a huge enterprise. In this respect, I would like to pay a special tribute to David and Joan Gibson who worked tirelessly, all hours, burned every candle to get this show on the road. Their efforts were astounding.

My other thanks go to Marcel, Barrie, Neil for their incredible contributions on sound; Gethin & Al for their superlative efforts in erecting a Syrian hospital ward in Queen Street at breakneck speed, and for Gethin’s abiding enthusiasm; to Leigh for her involvement in location sourcing and casting that delivered a fine crop of professional actors to fill our screen; to Peter for the superb logo he produced for our film production company - Liferaft Films. If I have not mentioned you by name, please forgive me - your contribution has not been forgotten and I am deeply indebted to each and everyone of you.

Deepest thanks from the bottom of my heart

John Groslin.

**LIFERAFT**  
LifeRaft Film Productions

# The Greenway Project

## Colchester Film Makers working with Greenway North Essex

Greenway North Essex is a not-for-profit organisation set up by volunteers for the establishment of safe, sustainable walking and cycling routes for the benefit of the local communities. It will link Halstead, Earls Colne, Coggeshall and Kelvedon along permissive routes, designated 'quiet lanes' and re-purposed track beds.

Colchester Film Makers are producing a short film to help promote the project. The film will act as an introduction to the 'Greenway'. Target audiences include: local people who could benefit from the scheme; parties who could contribute to, or who will be affected by, the project; and potential volunteers. The film will be shown at meetings with funding organisations and while it cannot possibly cover all the issues involved, it will introduce the main elements of the plan. In particular it needs to show that local sentiment is behind the project and that people want it to happen.

Three filming sessions have already taken place. The first shoot took place at a track clearing session with volunteers clearing undergrowth, dead trees, etc from a section of the planned route. Our second outing took place in and



around the Marks Hall Estate which will provide a key section of the route for the greenway. During this we captured interviews with some of the key players and also shot drone footage of the surrounding countryside. On the 7th July a sponsored cycle ride took place next to the Earls Colne airfield. CFM was there to record the event and to interview participants and find out about their involvement.

A treatment and draft script has been presented to Greenway North Essex. This was well received, with only minor modifications being suggested. A rough edit is currently being put together using the material we have already captured. After that is done we will identify the 'gaps' in the film and draw up a shot list of material that we still need. The plan is to cover all outstanding material in one day's filming. We may well be looking for volunteers to help! We are hoping to complete the editing, etc by the end of August / early September.

The following members have been involved in the project so far: John Jones, Peter Silk and Paul Desmond. During the filming of the sponsored cycle ride they were joined by ex-members Lionel Bloomfield and Roger Allan.

Peter Silk



## The Questing Beast

If you go down to the woods today be sure of a big surprise! A 15ft monster has wiped out everyone but our sword-wielding hero, will he survive?

It was very changeable weather for the film shoot of The Questing Beast. Rain was relentless on Saturday so the crew had to spend most of the time visiting the four filming locations and co-ordinating the action with the actor and planning where the camera would go. It was simply too wet to film anything.

Fortunately, starting an hour earlier on Sunday, the beautiful blue sky and sunny weather returned for us and we managed to complete all the shots in one day. With a fantastic team effort, held together by the hospitality of ex-club member Anthony Gibson and his partner Carla, we achieved all the shots in three locations before lunch and completed the big fight sequence at the final location in the afternoon, after we enjoyed some lovely fire-cooked food together.

Joe Brown visited the club last season seeking help producing his stop-frame animation (another tribute to Ray Harryhausen) silent film idea.

With the clubs help the film was planned, cast, location sourced and now it has been filmed. Joe will be working with his editors and animators to complete the short and returning to the club to give us an exclusive screening when the project is complete.

Once the footage has been edited and the monster added, the final musical score will be performed by Southend Orchestra and recorded as the original soundtrack.

It is Joe's intention to enter the completed film into some film competitions and festivals next year. He is also joining the club as one of our first **donation members** and will be popping in to some of our meetings to stay in touch with us in the future.

Club members Gethin and Leigh supported Joe all the way through and he has passed on his thanks to us and all of the team for our efforts in bringing his film idea from his head into real life. We can't wait to see how it all turns out!

Leigh Martyn Thomas



Actor Jedd Bonstad-Clark with Make up, Prop and Costume Supervisor Jean Arthur



Writer/Director Joe Brown with Camera Lead Mark Brindle and Site Manager Anthony Gibson



Joe with Assistant Director Leigh Martyn Thomas and Crew Assistant Al Croft



Joe with Assistant Director Gethin Thomas and Mark Brindle with the poncho we all wanted on Saturday.



# Limited Special Offer

Now here is an offer to excite your inner film maker!



Regular or slim fit mens or ladies t-shirt above  
Zip Hoodie below



We are now offering  
**UPDATED CLUB MEMBER MERCHANDISE!**

With many filming projects on the go, when we are out and about, we will be encouraging a united look. We have costed T-shirts and Zip Up Hoodies and will offer one item at a subsidised cost per member.

Remember your Membership Benefits include:

36 x Tuesday Club Meetings  
Special Guest Speakers  
Two Celebration Meals  
Refreshments  
Exclusive Film Screenings  
Use of club equipment (conditions apply)  
All Group Film Making Challenges

## **SPECIAL OFFER**

Club T-Shirt - Reduced to £5  
Club Hoodie - Reduced to £15

All items have the club logo on the front left and Colchester Film Makers on the back.

Samples will be available at club first week back and the order placed at the end of September.

**Limited Time Offer.**



Who are Colchester Film Makers? To help any new members get to know us and to help us to get to know them, we are developing a new section on the website. Profiles are optional.

You can let newbies know about your film making interests. Are you experienced in writing, directing, acting, filming, sound, lighting, casting, props, costumes, set building, SFX, VFX, production management. Tick any of the boxes that apply to you and include how you would prefer to be contacted and addressed.

You can also opt to be a **mentor** to a new member, who will shadow you for their 3 week trial project. A really fun way to help welcome them and share your skills all at once.