



DUDLEY DARBY



▲ GTC Student Membership Officer James Fulcher

# The Bill Vinten GTC University Award

This year has seen a perfect example of what can happen when "Great minds think alike". At the 40th AGM of the GTC, the Guild was delighted to be able to announce a new Award designed to encourage excellent teaching of camerawork skills within UK educational establishments. The 'great minds' were those of GTC member Stuart McKears and one of the GTC's most revered sponsors, Bill Vinten. Unbeknown to each other, they had both independently come up with the idea of an Award aimed to support young aspiring cameramen. Here, Stuart explains the thinking behind this exciting new initiative.

### Skills gap

In the last few years there has been an increasingly commonly voiced perception of a lack of camera skills in the industry. Whether this is an actuality, or merely a manifestation of the proliferation of instant news, multiple channels and competition from other types of media, is uncertain. But it is fairly clear that the relevance of the picture to content is all too often undervalued, with the result that, gradually, the quality of pictures becomes less important.

Let's not forget that the growth of television in the 1950s did not kill off the print industry – but it did destroy the pictorial magazines such as Picture Post and Illustrated London News, among others.

Generally, drama still maintains high craft skills, although even here the pictures are often no longer part of the story-telling, presenting instead just a frame for the words. However, all too often, other genres are

perceived as requiring lower and less important craft skills, rather than – as it should be – different but equally important craft skills.

Yet, the simple fact is that, while craft skills can never replace content, craft skills will always enhance content, whatever the genre.

My very personal view is that one reason for the deterioration in craft skills is inadequate teaching and lecturing on technical matters in the academic institutions. This problem has historic origins in that many degrees were created back in the 1970s, when film was the only medium for students. This was often Super 8, so quality was not considered important – just getting a usable image was considered an outstanding success!

So, in 2011 at BVE, I suggested to Graeme McAlpine and other GTC members the idea of a GTC University Award with a format I hoped might raise awareness that camera

craft skills are essentially important and need to be properly learnt and understood by future media graduates.

### I was not alone!

After presenting my concept, I was delighted to learn that Bill Vinten had already offered to finance a GTC annual prize for the younger generation of cameramen. I was asked to contact Bill who invited me up to his home, where I spent an incredibly interesting two days. Along with talking intensively about the award, I also heard all about Bill's work as a cameraman before the Second World War and subsequent career with the Vinten company. I viewed his fascinating workshop and collection of memorabilia, and even learnt how to stop a hot spot on back-projected film!

We refined the original format for the award and Bill most generously offered to fund it for 5 years.

### Rewards for both the college and the student

The format of the Bill Vinten GTC University Award invites any single faculty, college or university in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to submit a single portfolio containing three complete films. Each of the films in the portfolio must include a specific camera credit for a student, who must be, or have been, a final year student during the period 1 May 2012 to 1 April 2013.

The **winning faculty, college or university** will be awarded the Bill Vinten University Trophy. The **winning camerawoman or cameraman** will receive work experience, paid with expenses, equivalent to £2500.00, plus 1 year's associate membership of the GTC. **Two runners-up** will each receive work experience, paid with expenses, equivalent to £750.00 each, plus 1 year's associate membership of the GTC.

A GTC Charitable Trust is being set up to administer the financial arrangements.

With high fees and unease about media-type degrees, potential students will become more and more discerning about their choice of university, so I hope and expect that the Bill Vinten GTC University Trophy will become a prestigious mark of quality and a useful recruiting tool for the winning faculty, college or university.

The winning students will find the work experience provided by GTC members invaluable. Equally, any GTC member who volunteers to arrange the paid work experience



▲ Stuart McKears, Director of the Award

will know that they are employing the very best of the future generation of camerawomen or cameramen.

### Fact File

For more information about how to apply for the Award, contact the Director of the Bill Vinten GTC University Award on: [University.award@gtc.org.uk](mailto:University.award@gtc.org.uk) or 07546 285802

See more about the Bill Vinten GTC University Award in the Student section of the GTC website: [www.gtc.org.uk/students.aspx](http://www.gtc.org.uk/students.aspx)



## Bill Vinten GTC University Award 2012–2013: Eligibility and Rules

1. A single portfolio from a single faculty, college or university located in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
2. Each portfolio must contain only three complete films on separate DVDs.
3. Each film in the portfolio must include a specific camera credit who must be, or have been, a final year student during the period 1 May 2012 – 1 April 2013.
4. Each film should have attached information about the camerawoman or cameraman and details of the camera(s) used.
5. Each film in the portfolio must be from a different TV genre\*.
6. Each film in the portfolio must have been shot during the period 1 May 2012 – 1 April 2013.
7. The winning faculty, college or university will be awarded the Bill Vinten University Trophy.
8. The winning camerawoman or cameraman will receive work experience, paid with expenses, equivalent to £2500.00, plus 1 year's associate membership of the GTC.
9. The two runners-up will receive work experience, paid with expenses, equivalent to £750.00 each, plus 1 year's associate membership of the GTC.
10. Winners must be eligible to work in the United Kingdom.

- There is no cash alternative.
- No single film and no individual entries will be accepted.
- Closing date for entries: 31 April 2013.

\*Sports, Sitcom, Documentary, Soap, Travel, Holiday, Kids, Drama, Makeover, Current affairs, Cookery, Reality TV, Talk Show, Shopping, Game Show, Music, Gardening, Lifestyle, DIY, Charity, Pets, Wildlife, Animation (excluding computer generated).

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