

Doctor John William Howden

1942-2016

In 2005 John Howden wrote an article for our website in which he describes an animation software program called 'Blender'. Here is his first paragraph...

If you thought, as I did in 2005, that animation software must be too expensive, think again. I found a powerful program on the Internet called Blender and it can be downloaded for nothing! It is "open source" and hence you can use it freely.

From that moment on he started winning our competitions with little animated films with intriguing titles, 'Blockhead', 'A Load of Old Cobblers'.

In time he turned his Blender talent to CGI creating amazing artefacts for our films. A drawbridge and windmill for 'Uncertain Proof'; a horse drawn cart and fully functioning beam engine together with a windmill for 'Clarkson' and, most recently, the tidal clock for 'Tide and Time' - one of the City Docks Films.

His tour de force was a computer animation of the Box Roman Villa for the Box Archaeological and Natural History Society.

We made our much loved and respected cgi Guru an Honorary Life Member in 2014 and remember his last visit to us in April of that year as one of the distinguished guests at a special premiere of recent films.

John died in Southmead hospital on the 12th April.

The final sentence in the funeral eulogy sums him up.

John was a quiet, brave and private person, a gentleman and a bit of a boffin.

Mike George.

Gordon Young writes...

I make documentaries and I plagiarise from books for background info. I tell everyone about what I'm working on. In stark contrast, John made

really original, animated films. We knew nothing about them until they hit the screen. What an impact they made! I should learn from the master. From now on, I'm not releasing any information about my productions beforehand; I shall be inspired by his unassuming manner. I only hope that, without prior marketing, my films make something approaching the impact that John's films made.

John was happy to recommend animation software to club members although I held his skill in such high esteem I didn't even try to embark on an animated project. He made a film about little coloured boxes about ten or twelve years ago. I 'd really like to watch it again. How many other films have such enduring appeal?

Gordon Young