

Family Film Experts



How often do you reach for your smart phone to film your children? Or perhaps you have a camcorder specifically for filming your family?

These days it is easier than ever to capture milestone moments on film but more often than not the memories are confined to a tape, memory card or the cloud as sentimental but time-strapped parents struggle to know what to do with all the footage.

As the parents of two young boys (Joseph, 5 and Charlie, 2) Ed and Charlotte Danson fully understand the desire to capture every moment for posterity. They are the couple behind Lemongrove Productions, a film production company based in West London that specialises in weaving together home videos and shooting Film Portraits to create beautiful films that are treasured by the families who commission them.

Ed Danson, a former broadcast cameraman and editor, explains: “it’s really difficult to edit your own footage, even if you do have the time and technical expertise. A parent will film baby’s first steps for hours, but actually you only need a few seconds of footage to convey that moment in an edited film. Equally parents will proudly shoot an entire school concert but no one really needs to hear Silent Night performed by 30 enthusiastic recorders in its entirety ever again...”

What we do is help families with the daunting task of what to do with their family footage. The first task for many is to compile a digital archive. We gather together all of their footage, which is usually spread across lots of devices and can include everything from cine film, mini dv tapes and VHS to iPhone and GoPro footage. We then transfer it all. So every memory is backed up on a hard drive, labelled in chronological order and in a format that you can access via your computer or television. It’s immensely satisfying and gives clients great joy to know that it’s sorted.

Once footage has been located we can begin editing. Taking footage from a designated period of



time, incorporating photos, titles and effects where appropriate and set to a soundtrack of your choice. Some clients have a film made annually, others decide on a highlights reel to mark a big birthday or special occasion. It’s a real privilege to be allowed to edit people’s home videos and one that we never tire of.”

Charlotte Danson continues... “Our other passion is Film Portraiture. This is when we spend a day filming with a family. We interview the children and the parents and capture them all on camera together. We give them all the raw footage but also edit together a 15 minute ‘Film Chapter’ that depicts their family at that point in time. We capture their children’s voices, mannerisms, opinions and dreams. The day also gives the parents a moment to reflect and record their thoughts on the magic and mayhem of parenting. The results are fantastic and provide brilliant reference material for future 18th and 21st birthdays and wedding speeches! One client told us that “after ten years of being consigned to a voice behind the camera on family holidays it was brilliant to finally make it on to the screen”.”

Given Ed and Charlotte run a business dedicated to preserving precious memories you would assume they would be entirely up to date with their own home video editing. “I wish!” laughs Charlotte, “though for Christmas, Ed produced a film from our wedding footage, 6 years on from the big day. On Christmas night we sat down to watch it with my family and thoroughly enjoyed it, it was wonderful to hear my father’s speech again and marvel at how young we looked!” ■

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THE DETAILS

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