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Yet again I find myself apologising for the long interval between Newsletters but I think you will appreciate that the volume of I.C.S. work and the high postal charges govern these occasional publications.

Currently the news is good. The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, England have obtained the theatre in which we hope to instal 3-Strip Cinerama. An orthodox flat screen will also be fitted, dropping down in front of the Cinerama curve, giving the theatre the world's most comprehensive and versatile projection system, permitting virtually any process or movie to be shown as originally intended. Already equipment to present Cinerama, 70mm Cinerama, UltraPanavision, Flat 70mm, VistaVision and any 35mm system is to hand.
HOPING TO OPEN WITH THIS IS CINERAMA IN APRIL 1991.

The last items of missing Cinerama hardware have now been found, the legendary louvre guide boards, and retrieved from an abandoned European theatre. All we need now are the prints.

To be viable, the project requires that we use new, mylar-base prints. Even if original Technicolor IB prints in mint condition could be traced, it is unlikely that now over 30 years old they would survive continuous usage at Bradford. This brings us to the last major obstacle as, despite our approaches, ~~Cinerama Inc still seem reluctant to discuss permission to reprint from the master negatives, even though we have indicated that Cinerama Inc need not necessarily be involved in financing these.~~ Currently the ball is in Cinerama's court as ~~their cooperation is crucial.~~ It is hoped that offers of sponsorship will cover the laboratory costs. Steps are now underway to transfer the rapidly rotting sound masters to new stock.

NOW
HAPPENING

* NOTE. CINERAMA NOW NEGOTIATING OVER PRINTS.

In the last Newsletter we spoke of the discovery of a TRUE CINERAMA ON ONE FILM process which had been developed at Oyster Bay but which was axed by the management in favour of the 'bent' 70mm version. Below are two recent photographs of the prototype camera and lens.

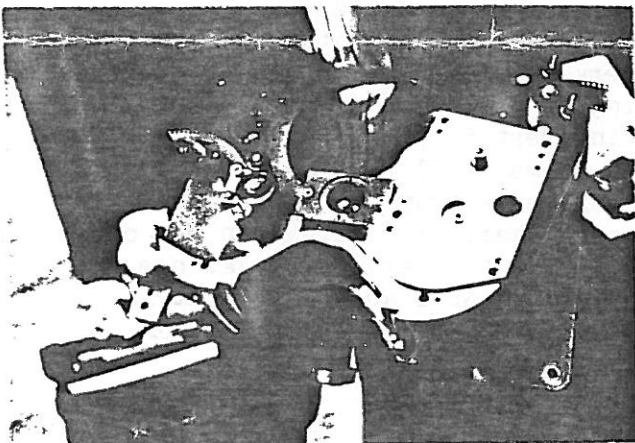


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Fig. 1 shows the camera mechanism as viewed from the lens side. The deeply curved section at the front centre is the gate, curved to match the Cinerama screen. To its right, beneath the shiny plate, is the I6 perforation per frame film advance. The camera operates horizontally with the film travelling left to right as seen in the photograph.

Fig. 2 shows the unique lens from the film gate side. Note the unusual rear

element. The lens covers the full 146 degree field of view of Cinerama EXACTLY as in the original process and being on a single negative is free of all the defects inherent in the triple film system as well as being easily adapted to provide any alternate print format. The lens iris operated within an oil-filled optical block and over the years some oil has seeped out damaging the front element. Had development continued there can be no doubt that Cinerama would have remained a major force in the Cinema. Indeed a similar camera system has recently been proposed using 35mm film advanced 12 perforations horizontally as an alternative to direct 65/70mm photography..

In Essen, West Germany, there is a Cinerama theatre which still retains all the projection equipment in situ. All it lacks to present 3-strip is the louvred screen. Unfortunately this has been removed and the louvre guides destroyed. Given reinstatement of the louvred screen, this theatre could add to the revenue needed to defray the enormous costs of the new prints. Strangely this theatre does not appear on any of the official Cinerama Inc lists now in the I.C.S. archives.... Maybe that is why it survived? Very rarely, it has Phillips Cinerama projectors, only the second set known.

But the most amazing find at Essen is a previously unknown 3-strip short, running about 20 minutes and featuring footage of Austria with links by Lowell Thomas. Does anyone know anything about this film?

The Renault Dauphin commercial is now running in private demonstrations in Paris using new prints produced from the privately preserved only known print. A French enthusiast has restored the Century projectors being used but, regrettably, an incorrect screen is being used. Subsequently Renault via the I.C.S. have approached Cinerama Inc for the loan of one of the cameras to shoot new sequences destined for the 1990 Spanish World Fair.

From an impeccable source has come information that Max Steiner wrote the musical score for THIS IS CINERAMA but that, for contractual reasons, could not be credited. Louis Forbes is credited as Musical Director. A recent CD of Max Steiner's work contains 8 bars of THIS IS CINERAMA used as the introduction to a different film score.

But, as the movie scripts say.... We've kept the best to last...

In mid December, after a two year search, Willem Bouwmeester (ICS Technical Consultant) and John Harvey (U.S.A. Cinerama Preservationist) flew to Long Island to meet Mrs Doris Waller, widow of Fred and Fred's stepson John P Caron, himself a Cinerama pioneer. It proved to be a fascinating journey into the early world of Cinerama, illustrated with many of Fred's papers, designs, his workshop and some early equipment such as the prototype lens block for the Cinerama camera. They reminisced over Cinerama's golden days with the help of Waller family photographs and mementoes of the period. Mrs Waller has subsequently, very generously, loaned some material to the Bradford Museum for its rapidly developing major Cinerama collection.

Amazingly no American archive has shown any interest in preserving Fred's work. Some short sections of the original 1948 test films still exist, some shot in Fred's lounge, though the nitrate negatives for these were destroyed some years ago having become unstable. We now believe that there was an earlier camera than the one we have christened the Waller camera, that is No 1 with the parallel magazines.

Blueprints and Invoices now rediscovered show camera No 1 as being built in 1950 at Oyster Bay. This was the camera used for THIS IS CINERAMA. Therefore an earlier camera must have existed and been used for the first tests.

Over the next few years additional cameras were built to a modified design by James C Reddig. These all have radial magazines. The last one to be built being No 7, built in 1958. Camera No 1 was last seen being used on the Cresta Bobsleigh Run for CINERAMA HOLIDAY as the new camera No 2 was deemed too valuable to send down that precipitous ride. On return to Oyster Bay No 1 was dismantled.

CAMERA NO 1 FOUND - IT IS IN LOS ANGELES.

What has 1990 in store for the I.C.S. Hopefully it will see the first reprint and Bradford nearing completion for a 1991 opening. I still believe that there is scope for a maximum of 5 installations in similar venues around the world which would make the provision of the enormously expensive new prints realistic and thus lead to the availability of the two ex-MGM and one independent feature made in 3-strip. Then there are the 12 Russian ones????

Keith H. Swadkins, M.B.K.S.