

THE
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SOCIETY.

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It may appear that a year's gap in newsletters indicates a loss of impetus or enthusiasm in pursuing our aim of restoring the exhibition of the original CINERAMA and CINEMIRACLE productions.

NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

The I.C.S. has become almost a full-time occupation for both myself and Willem Bouwmeester (Technical Consultant North) which, being in addition to our regular employment, has meant many late night hours of letter writing and world-wide phone calls.

During the past year, Willem has visited the privately preserved installation in the U.S.A. and met with Micheal Foreman, President. Cinerama Inc. All of this plus touring Europe rescuing Cinerama projection equipment. The latter is now almost complete and is currently awaiting restoration to AI condition. However we still seek some items and a source of spares if we are to keep an installation running. Additionally we need the synchronising and print viewing equipment for handling, making up and servicing the prints.

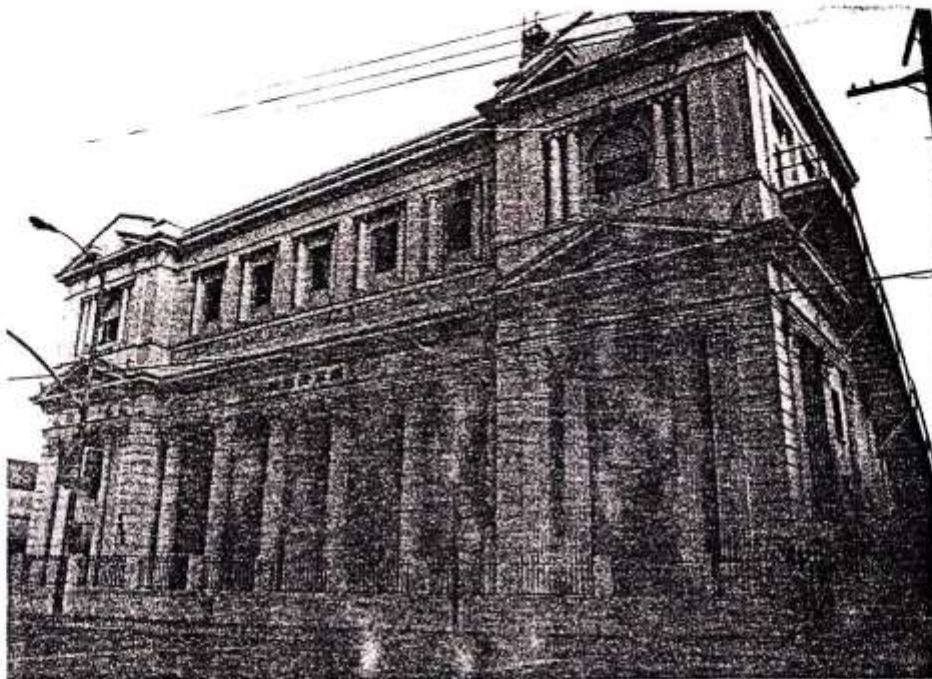
I have just returned from Los Angeles and a meeting with Micheal Foreman which further explored the realities of restoring a 3-Strip installation. During that visit we had the opportunity to visit Pacific Theatres CINERAMA DOME on Sunset Boulevard. More about that later.

At this point I must clarify the situation regarding the Bradford Museum Project. Possibly due to the euphoria of our previous newsletter, several magazines published the project as a fact. It is most important that everybody understands that whilst the Museum is very interested in the possibility of having the world's only CINERAMA 3-Strip theatre as one of it's attractions, any final decision is dependent on financial and viability studies. Any such installation would have to satisfy CINERAMA Inc and the I.C.S. that it would be undertaken in the true spirit and quality that the magic of CINERAMA stood for. At the time of writing no decisions have been taken and the I.C.S. continues to investigate possible alternative venues. Remember that even using the I.C.S. restored equipment and with CINERAMA's co-operation, we are still looking at an expensive project. Whilst rumours of other attempts to restore 3-Strip occasionally circulate, we are the only group with a practical proposition at this time. At least we are working with CINERAMA Inc's permission.

In previous newsletters we have catalogued the death of CINERAMA in the U.K. This long running saga now seems to have reached the end of the trail. On November the Fifth, 1967, the last UK performance took place in the 'tent' at Walsall when the film was 'Seven Wonders of the World'. The show was closed at very short notice and everything moved to a farm near Nottingham. After removal of technical equipment and prints by Cinerama, the rest was auctioned on site. Two European theatres, however, retained thier 3-Strip equipment well into the 70's (Barcelona and Tel Aviv). Until recently some equipment and rotting prints were stored in Barcelona but Spanish legal problems made retrieval impractical despite Cinerama's efforts. The Forum Theatre, Cinerama's H.Q. in Los Angeles, retained it's 3-Strip machines and some preserved prints until the demise of the old Cinerama company, and

WFD

it is now a Korean Chapel.



Ex CINERAMA H.Q. as in July 88.

In Europe the redundant 3-Strip projectors were converted to conventional 35mm and dispersed. A number of prints remained at the Casino Cinerama for many years before being used as 'spacing' in film editing suites. Brand new prints of 'Brothers Grimm' being cut up and used for editing the sound effects on 'Krakatoa, East of Java'. The Casino retained its 3-Strip projectors in store back stage until closure.

The old Cinerama theatres continue to disappear. The last UK Cinerama theatre still used as a cinema, though long since multiplexed, was the Cannon (ABC) Bristol Road, Birmingham. It closed suddenly last September to become yet another MacDonaldis. The only survivors known to the I.C.S. are (all 70mm Only) Pacific's Dome Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle, Chicago and Honolulu. Honolulu is reportedly under threat though it was still operating when I visited Hawaii recently. There may still be a theatre in Scottsdale, Arizona but we cannot confirm this. Atlanta, Georgia currently awaits the bulldozer whilst New Zealand's last survivor succumbed to the demolishers in January (Wellington).



Wellington. N.Z.
1987.

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The Los Angeles CINERAMA Dome celebrates it's 25th Anniversary this year.



PACIFIC CINERAMA DOME. July 88.

and special arrangements have been made for theatre tours including a 70mm demonstration reel from 'This is Cinerama'.



In celebration of the 25th Anniversary Of the Cinerama Dome Theatre, **free tours of the theatre will be conducted each Tuesday at 10:00 am** accompanied by special showing of film clip from **THIS IS CINERAMA. PUBLIC IS INVITED.**

Pacific hope to play the newly restored version of 'It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World' at the Dome, it being the original opening presentation. There is currently a small display of CINERAMA memorabilia in the theatre foyer. I can confirm that the Dome still retains that Cinerama magic with it's vast curve of gold tabs covering albeit a single sheet screen and the sound system is superb.

In September 1992, CINERAMA is 40 years old. We must do something spectacular to celebrate the Ruby anniversary of Fred Wallers breathtaking process.

Micheal Foreman has clarified the position of the present Cinerama Inc for us as well as ascertaining the state and existence of the original movies and we are indebted to him for his continuing assistance. Cinerama Inc is nowadays purely an investment company though it still retains the rights to the Cinerama process, trademark, logo etc as well as the negatives and preprint material and some equipment including the cameras, though the latter are in poor condition.

Until recently the sound masters were a matter of concern to us but these have now been traced and examined, appearing to be in good condition at this time. The sound masters still exist for various languages and all the prologue negs exist as well. The only material not traced to date are the negatives for the Renault Commercial, thought to have been destroyed, and those for the 3-Strip version of 'Scent of Mystery' (Holiday in Spain) which, being split from a single strip negative, falls outside the present scope of the I.C.S. A single print of the Renault Dauphin commercial survives. Does any of the footage shot for the abandoned CINERAMA film 'The Eighth Day' survive? What happened to the three strip material originally shot for the 'The Golden Head'?

The next step in the restoration of the original productions must be to reprint short triple sections to check for color fade and shrinkage. Picture steadiness and interpanel colour balance were always problems and whilst the latter can be improved with modern laboratory techniques, the former could be a problem.

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Of the old prints that have survived the last 25 years, many are now showing signs of 'Vinegar Syndrome', a condition in which the acetate base starts to release acetic acid which eats through the film, spool and can eventually. The condition is irreversible and contagious to other films in the same store. There is no cure and reprinting is the only answer and that costs the sort of money nobody is willing to spend.

Of the CINERAMA movies, 'South Seas Adventure' and 'Search for Paradise' appear to be subject to copyright complications. 'Cinerama's Russian Adventure' is still owned by the producers who store both Cinerama and 70mm negs but no prints have been preserved. Generally exhibited in 70mm, 3-Strip prints were produced though Cinerama usually insisted on 70mm prints being used even at theatres still equipped for 3-Strip.

Turner Entertainments now own 'The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm' and 'How the West Was Won' and the 3-Strip masters are in the ex-MGM vaults in Kansas. No prints have been kept and Turners have quoted a ludicrous price for a new print.

There is no trace of 'Ready for Take-off', produced specially for the Las Vegas theatre in 1974 by Macgillivray-Freeman Films. The only detail we have is a running time of 40mins.

The Russian 'Kinopanorama' process was similar to Cinemiracle and thus compatible with Cinerama except for its use of a 9 channel soundtrack. Twelve travelogues were produced followed by one story film and exhibition continued in the USSR till 1976. These films formed the basis of 'Cinerama's Russian Adventure'. The only Kinopanorama theatre in Europe was in Paris and currently some of the redundant projection equipment is for sale, the old prints having disappeared into the Cinematheque Francais vaults.

'The Best of Cinerama' was produced by editing existing prints and adding a modified edited soundtrack. Thus no negative exists for this title.

With the help of members world-wide and the co-operation of the American Society of Cinematographers, the I.C.S. has been in contact with several Cinerama technicians including;

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| Gayne Rescher. A.S.C. | Cameraman at Oyster Bay; Cameraman, Cinerama Holiday; Director of Photography Aerial sequences, Cinerama Holiday, Seven Wonders of the World and Director of Photography, Windjammer. |
| Joseph Brun. A.S.C. | Director of Photography, Cinerama Holiday. |
| Jack Priestley. A.S.C. | Assistant Cameraman, This is Cinerama, Cinerama Holiday, Search for Paradise. |
| Joseph la Shelle. A.S.C. | Director of Photography, How the West Was Won (Civil War and Buffalo sequences). |
| Avery Lockner. | Cinerama Sound Recordist. |
| B. Wentworth Fling. | Technical Supervisor for Cinerama in charge of Research and Development. |

A U.S. member has contacted Lowell Thomas's widow but we have failed to trace any relatives of Fred Waller. Regretfully we have discovered that the following have passed away; Ernest Mouncer, Chief Engineer Europe; Charles Sweeney, assistant Chief Engineer Europe; Ray Sharples, Sound Recordist and Hazard Reeves, Inventor of Cinerama Sound and sometime backer of Fred Waller.

As we near the end of this newsletter, I would like to appeal for the loan of ORIGINAL stills, photographs and posters for the 3-Strip movies and theatres. There is a chronic shortage of illustrative material which we need for an article on the theme 'What Ever Happened to Cinerama' which we are producing as part of the promotion of our restoration project. Any such material will be photographed and returned immediately.

There was a 10 page booklet issued to Cinerama theatre managers on how to exploit Cinerama which we would like to borrow as well as any of Lowell Thomas's travel books detailing his adventures with Cinerama.

And now our new feature....CINERAMA TITBITS.....

1. 'Search for Paradise' was initially titled SEARCH FOR SHANGRI-LA.
2. The 3-Strip trailer to How the West was Won is available in the UK as a Super8mm Colour, CinemaScope sound print. The colour is badly faded and the film is truncated at both ends but still impressive.
3. The French 70mm production LA FAYETTE, we have been informed, was available as a 3-strip split print in Europe but we cannot confirm this. The programme makes no mention of the process at all.
4. The Eighth Day, the next but abandoned Cinerama production. Taking as it's theme 'Atoms for Peace', the prologue was to have lead from the book of Genesis to splitting the atom. Sequences completed before the project was abandoned included diving with the U.S. submaxine Nautilus, splitting the atom and an atomic explosion filmed in the South Pacific with the camera just 4 miles from the blast. Where is that footage now???

In 1977, Lowell Thomas wrote a long magazine article on the life and premature death of Cinerama (His description ..not mine). The article finishes with his suggestion for the future return of 3-Strip and the recovery of the ailing original Cinerama company. Amongst his ideas are those for future travelogues on 'Volcanoes', 'From Cairo to Capetown' and a follow-up to 'Windjammer'. Cinerama effectively died in 1978 and Lowell Thomas three years later.

Our thanks go to all those who have written to us with help, information and offers of assistance. Keep up the good work and CINERAMA will roll again.



Keith H. Swadkins.
European Representative.
The International Cinerama Society.

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