

THE INTERNATIONAL
CINERAMA
SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER NO:19.

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I must apologise for the long delay in producing a new Newsletter. In this age of Internet and E-Mail, with reams of information available at the touch of a button, the role of the traditional newsletter has changed. By choice, we do not have a website, nor do we contribute to one. The newsletter simply informs you what is actually happening behind the electronic facade and inaccuracies of the 'net. Over recent years I have tried to coincide the annual Newsletter with the announcement of the Bradford Widescreen Weekend. Regrettably, last year, I only received the programme 7 days before the event. Bill Lawrence has promised to improve on this in 2001. If you have access to the Internet, I suggest you keep an eye on the Museum's website: www.nmsi.ac.uk/nmpft/

The I.C.S. was conceived as a professionally based Society with the sole aim of restoring limited exhibition of the 3-Strip Cinerama process. Over the years the focus of the restoration project has moved from it's inception in New Zealand to the United Kingdom and now the ball is firmly in Los Angeles's court. However, whilst there has been no Newsletter for some time, we have not been idle. In many ways the last 18 months have been the busiest and most fruitful so far. The Cinerama negatives have been examined and, although overall they appear to be in good condition, several problems have already been identified and solutions investigated. Cinerama Inc protected their negatives with colour separations which could be used to retrieve any lost colour or missing sequences but that route is expensive. Even more expensive is the possibility of digital restoration. Test reels, picked at random from selected titles have been printed and the results are encouraging. The master soundtracks were found to be in terminal condition and these have been restored and copied with the assistance of enthusiast John Mitchell.

By the time you read this, the reprinting of THIS IS CINERAMA is scheduled to be underway. Cinerama projection facilities have been set up at the laboratory to view the new prints, and the first test reels should be coming off the printer soon. Problems over the financing of a new print of HOW THE WEST WAS WON are reputedly resolved and, hopefully, work on this will now go ahead, though as yet there is no confirmation. One breakthrough has been the discovery of the original laboratory grading sheets.

Sequences from David Strohmaier's documentary, THE CINERAMA ADVENTURE, were shown at the 2000 Seattle Film Festival together with reprinted test reels from CINERAMA HOLIDAY, CINERAMA SOUTH SEAS ADVENTURE and SEARCH FOR PARADISE.

There were also performances of THIS IS CINERAMA and HOW THE WEST WAS WON using John Harvey's preserved prints.

At the time, it was hoped that new prints of a couple of the "lost" titles would be ready for Seattle 2001 but the time scale now makes this extremely unlikely.

Bad news from Bradford. The soundtrack for their print of HOW THE WEST WAS WON is now unusable due to vinegar syndrome. This is an irreversible breakdown of the film base resulting in emulsion loss and buckling of the print. During the performance at last year's Bradford Widescreen Weekend, the projectionists had to break the soundtrack and put on a new take up spool whilst running. The distorted soundtrack was about to overflow the take up spool due to the severe buckle. Subsequently the Museum announced that no further showings would be possible until a new soundtrack could be obtained. This is an expensive undertaking and a drain on the Pictureville's budget. To assist the Museum to continue exhibition of this movie, the pinnacle of the Cinerama experience, in it's intended format, a fund has

been started towards the cost and several members have already donated. If you can help with this project, any donations should go directly to: Bill Lawrence. Head of Cinema. National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. Pictureville. BRADFORD. BD1 1NQ.

The I.C.S. is looking at the feasibility of replacing the short section deleted from the fight at the Prescott Camp by the German Censor (The Bradford print was rescued from a German Cinerama Theatre). After a run of over seven years, (This must be some sort of record), the Museum's 1993 print of the prologue to THIS IS CINERAMA, is virtually worn out. Recently an alternative original but slightly shortened version has been substituted.

The Pacific Cinerama Dome has closed for renovation and is due to reopen in Spring 2002 equipped with 3-Strip Cinerama and a full louvred screen. A gift shop with Cinerama memorabilia is included in the plans. The Dome will reopen as the focal point of a new entertainment centre which includes a 14 screen multiplex and retail centre.

John Harvey is looking for a new venue for his equipment and prints after the closure of the New Neon, Dayton, Ohio for remodelling.

By coincidence, two additional Cinerama venues have recently been suggested. One is the closed Indian Hills Cinerama Theatre, Omaha, Nebraska. The other is an embryonic suggestion for a dedicated Cinerama theatre in a popular USA resort area.

Brenda and I recently visited Madeira and found the toboggan ride from WINDJAMMER still operating over a section of the original route.

In reality it was rather tame and disappointing. To replicate the original effect necessitated running my film camera at half speed plus a substantial tip to the tobogganers. I suspect that the CineMiracle camera mounted on the sledge was running at around 12fps.

THEATRE AMENDMENTS.

CINERAMA.

Dayton. NEW NEON. Closed 15-04-00. Equipment removed to store.
Honolulu. CINERAMA. Closed November 1999 for Demolition. Equipment returned to Los Angeles.
Los Angeles. PACIFIC CINERAMA DOME. Closed for refurbishment Summer 2000.
Due to reopen Spring 2002 with 3-Strip and full, original-size louvred screen.
Melbourne. PLAZA. Screen had conventional centre section with louvred wings.
All Cinerama's equipment removed 25-07-68 and a single sheet fitted to Cinerama frame. Cinerama sign removed from marquee and lenses removed to store.
Omaha. INDIAN HILLS. Delete:Multiplexed etc. Insert:Closed 28-09-00.
Seattle. CINERAMA (Ex MARTIN). Press demonstration of Cinerama in restored Theatre Nov 1999.
First Public Cinerama Performances in the restored theatre 02-06-00.
Toronto. EGLINTON. Open as conventional movie theatre.

D-150.

Los Angeles. EGYPTIAN. Now a Film Arts Centre.

A collector has for sale mint copies of the Theatre programmes (ex-Casino) for CH/SW/SSA. He also has the 12 inch LP of CH (No Sleeve). Anyone interested please contact him directly: Mr. Alan Ashton. "Penalador". 2 Brockstone Road. St. Austell. Cornwall. PL25 3DW. (England).

Recently I came across an advertisement for a new Railway Book, HALFWAY TO HEAVEN by Terry Martin. The book features a few previously unpublished photographs taken during the filming of SEVEN WONDERS on the Darjeeling Railway.

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

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