

The Flying Dutchman Sadlers Wells (1959) (left) clouds and waves, (right) dissolving slides and chromotrope

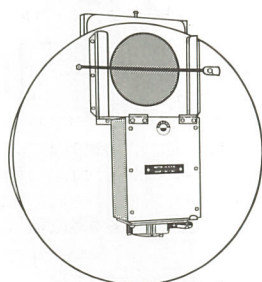
had violent tempers easily triggered, a replacement had soon to be conscripted and the short straw was drawn by a very young Eddie Biddle who chanced to have joined the firm. He had no obvious qualification for the job but somehow or other managed to survive under this cantankerous aggressive boss: to such effect that patience was rewarded by becoming in his turn the Ruler of the Strand's Effects. Most of the time he was on his own, sometimes with one assistant. It is a feature of this craft that a mere handful of names would cover the work worldwide. Someone might like to attempt a thesis on this arcane craft. Frank Weston joined Strand Electric after his "demob" in 1919. The firm's first premises in Garrick Yard had been acquired from a certain Percy Boggis who had been Loie Fuller's electrician. He was a specialist in Effects and U.V. tricks and Frank had been with him on the tours and used to relate that they were under strict instructions from this remarkable pioneer, in lighting and the dance, to cover up how it was all done.

The country of origin of some effects is obscure; certainly John Kleigl must have taken some of the ideas with him when he left Germany and started up in New York. I know that at least two effects, the Butterflies and the Falling Flowers were of distant Kleigl origin and it was a great pleasure to meet their current Effects Man perpetuating this work when I last visited their plant, in October 1975.

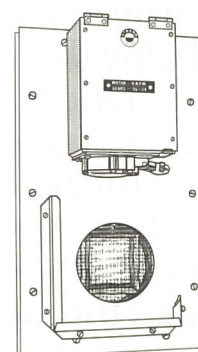
The staying power of the cloud, snow or wave effects and the rest of the cast is quite remarkable. If Arthur Bourchier were to return from the grave to play Long John Silver in a revival of his twenties production of J. B. Fagan's version of *Treasure Island* he would find on the shelves of T.S.L. the very same wave effect: electric clock motor instead of a spring clockwork but otherwise unchanged. It was T.S.L. (Theatre Sound and Lighting (Services) Ltd.) who took over from Rank Strand the sacred trust (i.e. Eddie Biddle) of making sure that theatre (and television) can always have their optical effects. The wave effect is still housed in a tall vertical wooden box wherein is fixed the umpteenth

reproduction of a rough sea as seen from the stern of a boat. This photograph was reputedly taken in the Bay of Biscay but with what, off what, by whom and when? How do we know that the unknown photographer did not set up his apparatus on the end of the pier at Clacton or Margate? The expert will detect, if he looks very carefully, some suggestion of a wash on the waves. Anyway the Bay of Biscay must be a much nicer place to enjoy a storm on. In front three ripple but otherwise clear glasses move up and down bending the light. These bits of glass have to be very gentle and used to come from the defective edges of a sheet. They are difficult to find as apparently today's sheets are *too* perfect—difficult to credit of anything these days but, there it is! We do know precisely where both the storm and fleecy clouds were when captured for all time upon their slides. It was King Street in the heart of Covent Garden market.

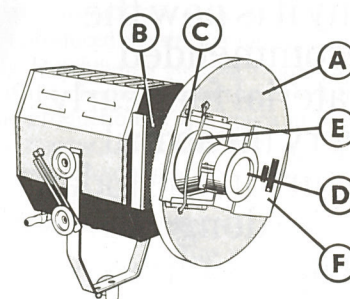
Originally the large circular effects slides were made up of three or four large pieces



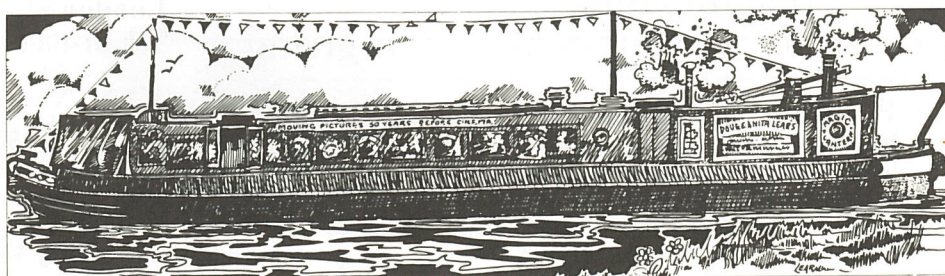
Disc type moving effects attachment



Box type moving effects attachment



Patt. 52 with effects disc and objective lens in position. The effect has been rotated by means of turntable to give downward diagonal direction to the projected effect. (A) Disc housing. (B) Turntable casting. (C) Colour (or mask) and objective runners. (D) Objective lens. (E) Objective lens retainer spring. (F) Motor housing,



The good ship 'Magic Lantern'