



Photos: Frank Grainger.



Getting to grips with Gemini 2.

(HND) qualification.

Ravensbourne is pinning its hopes on the development of cable television in outer London. When the cable network is extended to the college's doorstep in Elmstead Woods, John Lisney would like to see his school being allocated a one-hour slot per day, to give the students continual practical experience.

OPTIONS

He explained, 'The main buzz-words in the industry today are 'multi-skill' and 'freelance'. Students here always have gone into all areas and we wrote the course with options built-in to give them three areas in which they might wish to major.'

Those three areas, cameras and lighting, audio, and post-production and editing combine classroom theory with a generous measure of practical experience.

At any one time the school has six full broadcast crews 'on the road' producing legitimate documentaries, news features and magazine programmes. Subjects covered recently range from AIDS to modern cars, but all with a local 'angle' – in just the same way as any other TV or radio station.

However, although the key word may be 'multi-skill', bearing in mind that the school intends turning out qualified technicians who have the skills demanded by the media employment market, specialisation is allowed.

'For example, if a student showed a particular flair for, say, lighting and wanted to do that above all else, we would not want to stand in the way of someone who may become the world's greatest lighting director.'

But didn't the fact that students are left to roam the by-ways of Bromley with thousands of pounds worth of camera and lighting equipment cause him sleepless nights?

'Not at all – and for various reasons. First, the students here are all responsible, mature people who are very keen to learn. The other point is that they know that if anything happens to the equipment, it will not be there for them to use the next day. And they want to learn.'

Course tutors have all come from industry and keep themselves very much at the sharp

end of the business. They work, in theory, a 30-hour week and from this they are only actively teaching for 17 hours.

For the remainder of the time they are expected to take short tuition courses, study current journals and learned papers and visit manufacturers – in short, to keep their knowledge and teaching one step ahead of the industry. As with any teaching, the working week in practice is infinite, with a good deal of extra-curricula activity and tutoring.

Of the two new studios at the college, the 1200 sq ft Studio 1 is fitted-out with a level of luminaires and controls which would not disgrace any commercial TV station.

A Strand Gemini 2 in the control room operates a wide range of Strand studio luminaires, namely: four Iris 4 cyclorama top-lights, six 2/5kW Pollux's, six 2kW Castors, nine 1K Polaris's, five Arturo softlights, and both 1200W and 2500W Sirio HMI

suites containing, for example, a Rank Cintel Mk3 1" VTR console. Four separate laboratories cover electronics, computers, TV measurements and TV systems.

John Lisney's views on his



Expert guidance is on hand.

new facilities are quite clear. 'Let's face it,' he said, 'there just isn't the money available in education these days to do something on this scale.'

'Colleges are having to look more and more to industry for support in providing expensive hardware. And it works both ways.'



The final run-through before going 'live'.

spots. Cameras are ex-Limehouse Studios, rolling on a professional-standard resin floor.

Studio 2, at 500 sq ft, is principally a sound-recording studio, capable of accommodating anything from a rock band to a full concert orchestra. It also doubles-up as a 'flightcase' production studio.

Within the complex are post-production editing

'We are running vocational courses here. Both the college and industry itself, want to ensure that the people leaving here with a qualification are trained and suited to the job they will be doing.'

'But you can never over-emphasise the enormous contribution being made by Strand Lighting and like-minded companies in helping to train the up and coming generation.'