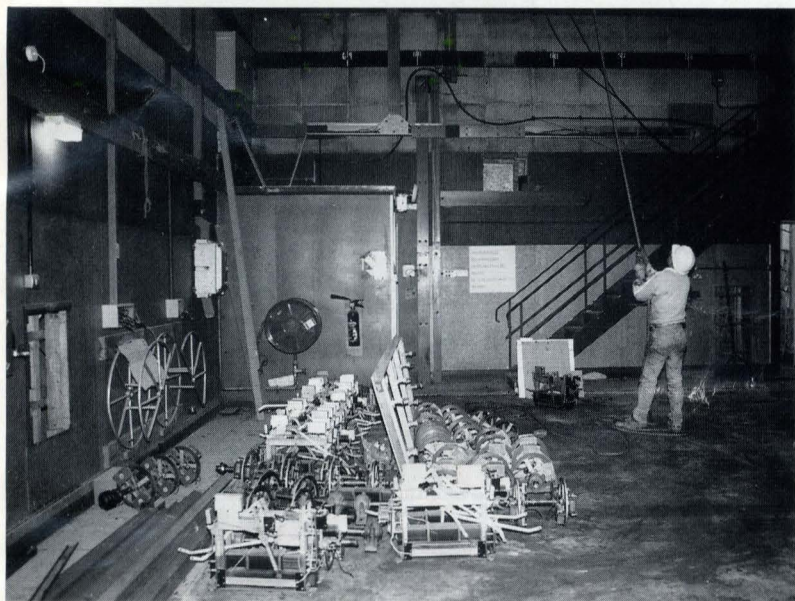


# Elstree Updates



The old gives way to the new. Strand electro-mechanical dimmers lowered respectfully to their rest. Twenty five years of good service. Think of it – they even dimmed 'The Power Game'.



The very handsome new Elstree Studio control suite with the latest Galaxy.

*What a year was 1914! The original Elstree Studios were founded, so was the Strand Electric and Engineering Company Limited. And of course there was that unpleasantness with the Kaiser!*

Elstree Studios is probably the most famous name in British film history, with the possible exception of Denham which came much later and Pinewood which really only came into its own after the disagreement with Herr Hitler.

Many of the films of Leslie Howard, that typical Englishman with his pipe and his grey flannels, who was actually a pure bred Hungarian, were made at Elstree.

In later days the studios were taken over by the Lord Grade's ATV. It was at this time that Strand installed their first Control and dimming system. System C (Saturable Reactor) and electro mechanical dimmers.

Let me now tweek the memories of readers who have reached, as the French say 'A certain age'. Do you remember the 'Plane Makers' or the 'Power Game'? The editor, who has long passed that same certain age, seems to recollect an actor named Patrick Wymark who was the main protagonist. Well, these weekly black and white sagas reached a good eight to ten million viewers in those days, and both shows came from Elstree.

The Tom Jones Specials were also made here, so the studios have had as successful a history on the small screen as on the large. And now, in 1988, Britain's most popular series 'East Enders', is made on the same hallowed ground, while 'Allo, Allo', from the adjoining studio D, gives the present owners of Elstree, the BBC, a winning double.

It is not often that I boast of the grand company in which very occasionally the Editor moves. But during my visit I had the privilege of being taken by Mr John Hegerty of the BBC to the very good canteen, where we pushed our trays to the till immediately behind 'Réne', the excellent Gordon Kaye, who somewhat surprised me, such is the consistency and believability of his French accent, by requesting additional baked beans in tones which would more normally be encountered on the stage at Stratford Upon Avon.

Another interesting point in the old ATV control room is that already the idea of the 'infinite access' floor had emerged. The hardwood flooring strips were all raised

some four inches to give space for cables, just as in today's computer rooms removable floor panels disclose a snakes nest of cable when lifted. To return to quality installations, I remember some years ago visiting with our Alan Luxford – who now looks after our UK sales to television – a theatre near Zurich where the dimmer room not only had an access floor, but the actual cabinets could be rolled forward like a keen housewife's gas cooker to allow inspection of the rear. Real Swiss thoroughness.

But if you want to see the very latest in television lighting control technology I would certainly be very proud to display the new Elstree set up. And you might even get to push your tray behind 'Réne

During my visit the original Strand dimmers were being removed, as one of the two new Galaxys works its magic via Strand PIP dimmers, while the other will drive the existing dimmers, originally harnessed to a Q file. The original ATV control and dimmer rooms speak of an age when commercial television was truly a license to print money. Just a couple of examples of the quality of the workmanship which could be afforded a quarter of a century ago. The old Strand dimmers spent their trouble free lives in two lockable, room sized cages made of expanded metal on a steel framework. To prevent the possibility of a single drop of moisture, either by condensation or from a roof leak, falling upon them. A specially formed 'roof' with 'guttering' topped the cages – and this was made all of stainless steel, no less.

The large wall cabinets in which the control lines were terminated are a joy to see. Every cable runs in geometric perfection, while the screw heads holding on the wooden fillet around the door frame have all their slotted heads aligned!

Well, the new installation is no slouch in the quality stakes either and I will let the picture tell the story. But although Galaxy offers an infinity more than the old System C, there is no denying it is smaller. And of course, a great deal cheaper. Forget twenty five years of inflation and still a modern client will only pay well under half today in pound notes of what a similar sized control would have cost when ATV took over.

The age of brass and resistance wire has gone, and today's black boxes, or in Strand's case brown boxes, do so much more but do look rather less. I suppose it's the steam and diesel locomotive comparison in lighting control terms. ■



Two recent new car design exercises are ready for viewing under lighting controlled from a Tempus 24 channel 2G and a Parscan Briefcase.

## Designs In The Best Light

I.A.D. of Worthing are an international design company who carry out specialist styling and body and chassis engineering for the world's motor industry. They have chosen Strand Theatre Lighting to help display their designs to clients at their very best and to test colours and shapes under varying, but controlled, lighting conditions.

Our Sussex Service Agents, Messrs. K.A.V.E. of Hassocks, supplied and installed the equipment, and a very impressive job it is too.

I asked Martin Sellen, I.A.D.'s Contracts Manager, which car companies they had designed for. There was a pause. Had I asked an embarrassing question, with perhaps only an obscure name or two available? Hardly, "Well", said Martin, "I am just trying to think of those we haven't worked for!"

A project to which I.A.D. made a major contribution that is now just appearing on the world's roads is the new Volvo 440 and 480 series. In a very different role, the body panels of the rally-winning MG Metro GR4 was also born in Worthing.

Spread through 23 different buildings on an industrial estate, partly because of the company's rapid growth since it was founded in 1976 and partly to ensure

security between work for different clients, the Main Styling Studio represents the heart of the company. It is here that our products are installed.

There are six Prelude Fresnels with colour wheels and controls, seven Nocturnes with barndoors and four Parscans with a Briefcase controller, power supply and Buffer Box.

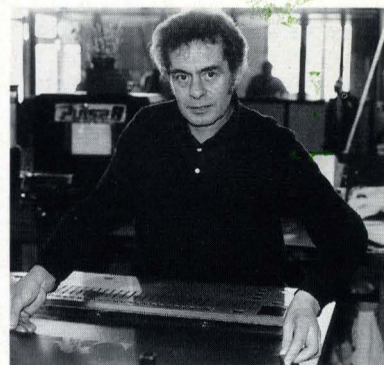
There is a 24 channel Tempus 2G and a 24 Permus Rack.

The Briefcase, the Tempus 2G and Colour Wheel Controller can be plugged into two different positions in the studio. ■



Parscans together with Preludes and Nocturnes light the Main Design Studio of I.A.D. Limited of Worthing.

## An Action 24 is Born



An Action 24 is Born. Eddie Murdoch makes a desk front plate on a Kirkcaldy Pierceall punching machine. Ironically, the machine itself is controlled by a memory system.



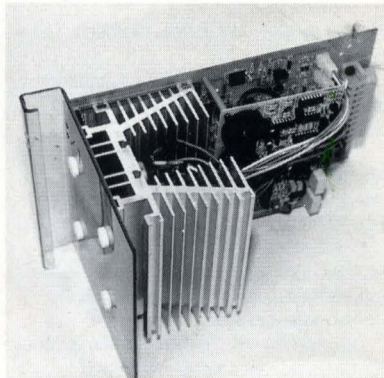
Irene Dryburgh using a compressed air screwdriver on Action final assembly.

## Intelligent PIP

We are not dealing here with a genetically programmed fruit seed, not even with the hero of 'Great Expectations', but with our very latest dimmer updates.

PIP dimmers can now, like chastened heretics or reformed alcoholics, confess their own faults on their Galaxy's V.D.U.

In conjunction with DFD Data Concentrators fitted to each dimmer rack, Galaxy is now capable of reporting lamp failures as well as the current status of each dimmer, and logging the occurrence of any faults such as NO LOAD CURRENT, NO OUTPUT VOLTS or DIMMER SHORT CIRCUIT.



An 'Intelligent' PIP Module.

The System will report 'DFD FAULT CLEAR' for the appropriate dimmer. Galaxy 3 Software supports intelligent PIP (when optional interfaces are fitted). Earlier Galaxy Premier Systems can be adapted. Fault messages are written on the Galaxy V.D.U. and, whilst channels whose dimmers are in perfect working order will continue to display their number and output level, if there is a dimmer or load fault the channel display will give the dimmer number and a fault code as an aide memoire.

'E1', for example, means there are no output volts, while 'E2' indicates a short circuit, and so on through a succession of possible maladies up to 'E7'. Only those dimmers appearing in the 'Active Format' will tell the operator of their troubles, to minimise any confusion, while faults on any dimmers in use will be added automatically to the Fault Log which Galaxy maintains, like any other good Strand Executive.

To reassure operators, a list of pending faults can be summoned to the screen or can be printed out.

It's almost a pity that PIP is so reliable that often I fear its intelligence may escape notice altogether. ■

## Easter in Rome

By Night



His Holiness the Pope in front of the Floodlit Colosseum.

By Day



The floodlights that cast such a tremendous light – Quartzcolor H.M.I.s.