

Dear Richard,

Voices from the Past (Tabs Vol 39 no. 2, November 82) certainly brings back memories!

Commercial security within Rank Strand was never one of your high spots and a number of customers and competitors used to eagerly await the latest round of interesting revelations contained in 'Playback', your internal newsletter of the early seventies.

As a memory system sales engineer at that time for Thorn's now deceased Theatre Lighting Division, I quickly learnt that the 'Black Dog' frequently referred to in 'Playback' was none other than myself! But perhaps Thorn's security was better; did you ever know that we reciprocated by codenaming you—Rank Strand's ace sales manager—'The Pink Panther'?

These days, installing substations and power plant in the Middle East is not the same fun as selling memory systems in competition to Rank Strand ten years ago—but at least it's far more profitable!

Yours sincerely

**Derek Gilbert**

Joint Managing Director  
Glanre Engineering Ltd.

*Derek - Are you quite certain we didn't want you to read "Playback"?*

Dear Richard,

I have been following the trial of the 263's debate with Tommy Morgan, F.W. Martin and Fred Benthan. (Tabs last issue, letters to Ed.) On looking through my old Tabs; Volume 20, Number 2, September 1962, page 18. There is a photograph ("Blitz" at the Adelphi 1962) and under magnification you can see the array of hand-made 263's.

Incidentally the same photograph taken from a different angle is shown in Tabs Volume 22, Number 1, March 1964 (Golden Jubilee) page 117, also Tabs Volume 21, Number 1, April 1963, page 6 shows the new production type and in Volume 21, Number 2, September 1963 there is a very clear photograph of hand-made models at the Mayfair Theatre.

Maybe this will end the trials "or will it"!

Yours sincerely,

**Pat Farrell**

Bourke Strand Electric Limited

P.S. We have no hand-made 263's over here.

Dear Richard,

I have read recent Pattern 263 correspondence with interest.

In 1962 I was running Strand's Canadian Company and had been pressing for a Strand "Cap Up" Ellipsoidal 750W spotlight to match this (then) workhorse North American Spotlight - The pattern 53 was proving difficult to sell in Canada! There were some desperate souls who tried a 750W lamp in the pattern 23 and 123 and still lived to tell the tale, however, this was a practice definitely not to be recommended and was no solution.

At about this time Century had just introduced their handsome



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

pressure diecast 1400 series 750W Leko which was making life really difficult for the competition.

In spite of the usual unflattering remarks concerning the special demands of the 120V market from colleagues in the UK, R&D managed to come up with the pattern 263. Prototypes for evaluation were only available in ones and twos so you can imagine how peaved I was during a visit to London to find the Adelphi Theatre absolutely festooned with hand-made 263's, all with 120V lamps in series. The lamps had been smuggled into the UK to avoid raising any suspicions on my side of the Atlantic!

Eventually, after inevitable design evolution some of which Fred mentions, both 263's and 264's became very popular. One advantage they had over the home grown North American 750W "Cap Up" Ellipsoidal was that they were intended to take 1000W lamps as well as 500W and 750W. They did eventually but not without scaring a few lamp manufacturers along the way.

Yours sincerely,  
**Philip Rose**  
Hartley Wintney

Dear Sir,

In your November issue I was interested to read the letter from Leslie H. Kemp. The book he refers to by the author Denis Sharp was in fact entitled "The Picture Palace, and Other Buildings for the Movies" published by Hugh Evelyn Ltd., of 9 Fitzroy Square, London W.1. in their "Excursions in to Architecture" series. It was published in 1969 and has long been out of print, and become quite a collectors' item, retailing in second hand bookshops at about £10, that is if you can find a copy at all.

The book you mention in the editors' note to his letter is a much more recent one by David Atwell published in 1980 by the Architectural Press, and is indeed a delightful book to have at one's bedside. The number of books specialising in the design and architecture of the cinema are few in number and a select bibliography might be useful to your readers. In addition to the two above, P. Morton Shand wrote a book called "Modern Theatres and Cinemas" under the Batsford name in 1930. As might be expected the USA has originated

a few these last years, the most recent being David Naylor's "American Picture Palaces—The Architecture of Fantasy", published by Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1981, and Ave Pildas wrote "Movie Palaces—Survivors of an Elegant Era" published by Clarkson N. Potter, New York 1980. Francis LaCloche has surveyed world cinema building in his "Architectures de Cinemas" published by Editions du Moniteur, Paris, 1981. Australia is well covered by Ross Thorne in his mammoth book "Cinemas of Australia via USA", published by the University of Sidney, 1981. These serve as a most useful introduction to a fascinating subject that is obviously already attracting its own group of enthusiasts.

Yours sincerely,  
**Alan A. Richardson.**  
Salisbury, Wiltshire

Dear Richard,

Bob Anderson's excellent article on accidents in the theatre prompts me to suggest further reading on the subject of accident investigation for those who are interested. The book is called 'The Human Factor in Aircraft Accidents' by David Beatty and is not good reading for those with weak stomachs who do a lot of flying! However your readers may be interested in the following key points;

- 1 People have a desire to please which frequently causes them to overlook or to bend normal safety requirements.
- 2 Instruments and equipment are rarely designed to be operated by people who are under stress.
- 3 To some extent the brain focuses on what it expects to see rather than what is there, rather like an optical illusion.
- 4 Where there isn't a clear decision straightaway the brain can be easily influenced by ridiculous factors that otherwise would never be considered, often this is unconscious.
- 5 Mental fatigue can set in faster than physical fatigue and pass unnoticed by someone who thinks of his job as purely 'physical'.

Happy flying!  
**Graham Waile.**  
Managing Director, Leisureplan

### THE EDITOR'S MEMORY SYSTEM QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 Answer: (c) Bolshoi, Moscow. Score 5.
  - 2 Answer: (b) Germany. Score 5.
  - 3 Answer: (c) The London Coliseum had a Strand IDM installed in 1968. Score 10.
  - 4 Answer: (b) MMS. Score 5.
  - 5 Answer: (c) Optical fader wheel (it features in Galaxy and M24). Score 5.
  - 6 Answer: (a) Memo Card. Score 5.
  - 7 Answer: (c) A legend comes up in the screen reading "Are you sure?" Score 10.
  - 8 Answer: All of them, plus too many more to list. Score 5.
  - 9 Answer: (a) Real colour monitor screens (we leave 'b' to our competitors!) Score 20.
  - 10 Answer: (c) To date approx 1,200 have been installed. Currently two Galaxys a week are being delivered. Now, from the launch of M24, there will no longer be any point in this particular statistic. Score 10.
  - 11 Answer: (c) Frederick Bentham, DDM. Score 10.
  - 12 Answer: (c) Richard Pilbrow pictured with one of the Strand Lightboards in the National Theatre. Score 10.
  - 13 Answer: (b) BBC TV—Studio C2, Cardiff 1973 and Studio D Lime Grove 1981. Score 5.
  - 14 Answer: (c) Audio Tape. A record can be made on any decent home audio recorder on a supermarket tape cassette. I realise only people who have read this issue will know the answer! Score 5.
  - 15 Answer: (c) Digital Equipment Corporation. DDM and Lightboard used PDP11 series. Light Palette uses LSI11. Score 5.
  - 16 Answer: (b) West Germany has 11 DDM's and 6 Lightboards. Score 5.
  - 17 Answer: (a) The playback performs up to 6 fades at any time and the fader wheel may perform a seventh fade in "Cue" mode (see page 5). Score 5.
  - 18 Answer: (b) Note the scrap value of a Grand Master might even pay for a new M24 system. Score 5.
  - 19 Answer: (c) To protect the memory from unauthorised recording. Score 10.
  - 20 Answer: (a) Of the 60 theatres who have memory systems, 55 chose Strand. Score 10.
- Maximum score 150. If you have scored 140 or over you either work for Strand or you are a real memory system enthusiast. Score of 100 shows reasonable 'consultant' or 'stage' electricians knowledge. 50 or below - read your TABS more carefully in future!