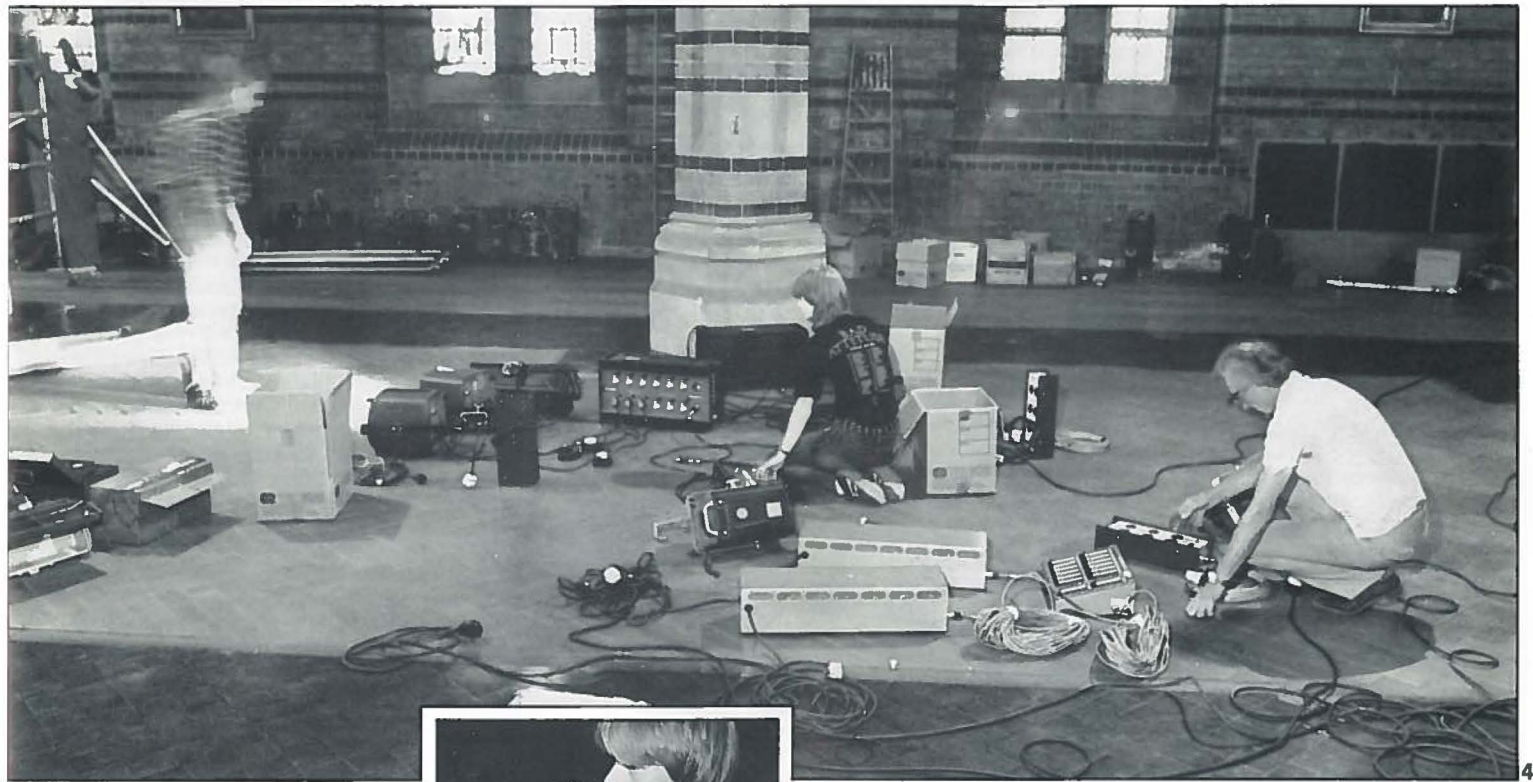




1. Carl Webster.
2. John de Vit.
3. Bob Coldicott.
4. The first hour – Does it all work?
5. Lisa Wood checking a Board.
6. John Burrell dealing the "rigging cards".



low voltage relays which can be located near to the lanterns to patch a particular dimmer channel from one lantern to another. This ensures that an inexperienced or harassed operator can not overload the supply by bringing up too many channels.

For access I have a light demountable aluminium platform tower with outriggers to enable safe working on lamps up to 18 feet above floor level. The platform area is 4 ft by 6 ft. The tower with an extra deck doubles as two spot towers with full guardrails when reassembled appropriately. It can just be carried in my estate car.

Intercommunication between board and spot operators (and, on occasions, with the lighting designer) is by a five station two-way Spectrum Audio intercom and there is also a home made two-way three station cue light system.

I am part of an informal group of amateur stage lighting enthusiasts in the north of our County. Present membership is about five. Whichever member of the group receives the approach for lighting services becomes the leader for the relevant production and is responsible for ensuring that the necessary equip-

ment is available from group members and that sufficient of the group will be able to attend the get-in and the early rehearsals and to operate or cover during the run.

There are some unwritten understandings among the group.

The first is that we never apply to light a show. All approaches have to come from outside.

The second is that we never charge for our services. Only consumables such as non-usual filter colours are recovered from the client.

The third is that we never work on a professional show.

The fourth is that we never lend our equipment for any show, however

worthy the cause, unless a member of our team is playing a leading role in the lighting thereof. Lighting can be fun: manhandling gear to and from racks and into and off vans is not.

The fifth and last is that we as individuals do not become members of any of the groups for which we work. We thus do not become involved in social functions and society politics at the expense of time for lighting.

A typical year will see three orchestral concerts and a band contest, one large scale musical, a dance production, a village pantomime, a church nativity play, and one straight play. This year we are looking forward to our first community theatre production. Past major productions have included a *Son et Luminiere* production taking some 18 months in the planning thereof, and a series of fast moving shows of the *Black and White Minstrels* and *Old Time Music Hall* type put on around Christmas for two weeks or more and a Drama Festival.

We try to make sure that all operators see as many rehearsals as possible at an early stage so as to identify the characters and to get the

feel of the production.

Because of the advancing years of some of the team we avoid productions in venues which will not give us adequate setting up time at conventional times of the day on weekends and mid-evening during the working week. It is no longer any fun to work through the night. Schools, colleges and churches are ideal.

Our operators tend to be the younger members of the team as they have the quicker reactions and the slower temperaments. It is encouraging to think that in years to come we can take pride in their productions – even though we may well say 'It was harder in our day'. ■

