

fader. A mix stores facility is provided for manual control, and automatic fades are performed by the progressive transfer of electronic data from preset to output.

Q-File introduced the idea of a mechanical servo-controlled fader for channel lever adjustment, and in Lighttime, all fader type controls are of the motorised type, including those for fade time setting and group mastering. Fade times are memorised, and on recall of a memory, the time setting levers motor automatically to their correct positions. However, this servo-control aspect is of special interest in the case of the output and preset master faders. When mix stores is selected, the preset master fader motors to zero, and the new memory is cut into preset. A crossfade can then be carried out by manual operation of these faders in the usual way, but on their release, the preset data is transferred into output and both faders motor back to their original positions in readiness for the next cue. Manual crossfading is thus a repetitive one way action, giving some justification to Lion's claim that 'Lighttime is the simplest of all consoles to operate'.

Other features include the ability to assign memories or channels to the six group masters with the provision for easily modifying individual group master channel levels. Vital statistics are capacity for up to 512 or 1024 channels and 200 semiconductor memories backed up by the possibility of ferrite, bubble or disc storage. Construction is in two parts with the remote processor unit housing the microprocessor board, one or two memory boards and a dimmer drive board for each group of 32 channels. Lighttime can be fitted with additional channel or memory controllers, and a remote control unit will be made available. It is however only fair to mention that much of this new equipment is still in the prototype stage, and its full operational performance has yet to be demonstrated.

The new luminaire is also the brainchild of Derek Lightbody, engineered by John Allwork and manufactured by John Page Ltd. Appropriately named 'Leo', the unit displayed was the first of a range of four, and is a new concept aimed at meeting the needs of television and the theatre for the next decade.

Leo is a multi-purpose lantern with a single light source which can be a single or dual filament lamp with easy conversion to HMI or CID. Variable optics allow operation as a spotlight or as a softlight with adjustable polar diagram. A blind type diffuser is incorporated, and it can be fitted with a pole operated half wire scrim frame. Provision is also made for a rotating cut out frame for soft edge pattern effects. The barn doors are of preferred aspect ratio, and are pivoted in ball races for easy rotation and the possibility of motorised control. The entire lantern is designed on a modular basis for ease of maintenance and replacement of parts.

Returning to Montreux as a whole, the symposium occupied four days with concurrent sessions in two lecture halls. In all, some 70 papers were presented on subjects which included television picture quality enhancement and digital recording, teletext and data transmission, satellite broadcasting, and community aerial systems including optical fibre transmission. Television studio lighting was not featured on this occasion.

## A Museum of Fishers

Theatric tourism takes Francis Reid to the seaside where he discovers a Theatre Museum amid the saltings of the North Norfolk coast.

*Wells-next-the-Sea*, a town on the North Norfolk coast (population 2400) is perhaps not one of the more obvious stops on the theatric tourist trail. Yet Wells has both Theatre and Theatre Museum. Flourishing.

Both the *Wells Centre* and its *Fisher Museum* are recent developments. A pair of Victorian grain buildings house a performance space, a gallery, the museum, a coffee (& stronger) bar, and enclose a courtyard with performance potential for anything that climate will allow.

This Arts Centre may be new but Wells was a theatre town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with an 1812 playhouse as part of the *Fisher* theatre circuit which this new museum records and celebrates.

Georgian East Anglia had its major *Norwich Theatre Circuit* based on Norwich Theatre Royal and touring to Cambridge, Bury, Colchester, Ipswich, Yarmouth and King's Lynn. And for half a century the smaller towns had the *Norfolk and Suffolk Company of Comedians* in which the Fisher family not only acted but performed every other function including management, music, painting and even printing.

The core of the Wells Centre Fisher Museum is the David and Charles Fisher Collections — material recently made available by Fisher descendants who have inherited the family archives. This is

displayed on a summer seasonal basis (the museum gallery is not yet equipped to offer a controlled environment across the seasons) under the exhibition title of *The Lamplit Stage*. The long low cool upper floor of the granary makes a gentle setting for an afternoon wallow in the pleasures of ephemera from what was essentially a *people's theatre*.

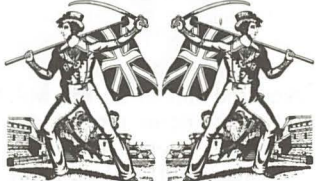
For me the visit to Wells would have been worthwhile for one item alone: the prints of the interior of Fisher's Theatre at North Walsham (drawn by G. T. Plumbly). These finely detailed interiors are familiar from the black and white photographs in Richard Southern's *Victorian Theatre* but the blue and gold was a revelation — apart from the feeling of contact with the period that one always gets from being with a contemporary print. (A subjective sensation as opposed to the rather more objective pleasure of a print reproduced photographically in a modern book.)

The North Walsham playhouse was built by David Fisher in 1827 and is it my personal fantasy that it seems to acknowledge some architectural debt to William Wilkins' Bury St Edmunds theatre of eight years earlier? Certainly the marbled columns of the double proscenium linked by curved doors of entrance evoke Bury rather than the prints of most other Georgian theatres. (Yes, I know that 1819 and 1827 were hardly

AT THE  
**WELLS CENTRE**  
*Staithe St. Wells-next-the-Sea*  
1st June - 30th Sept. 1981

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THE  
**LAMPLIT  
STAGE**



**AN EXHIBITION**  
*concerning the*  
**FISHER  
THEATRES**

IN GEORGIAN NORFOLK  
"The Norfolk & Suffolk Company of Comedians"  
FROM THE DAVID AND CHARLES FISHER COLLECTIONS  
Norwood Post, Fakenham, Norfolk

Georgian years, but the country theatres were Georgian in architecture, ambience and attitude.)

The building of their own theatres was a unique feature of the Fisher circuit. Their first was built in Wells in 1812 (replacing a barn that had served as an earlier playhouse) and by 1828 David Fisher, the founder of the family theatrical dynasty, had built new theatres or adapted existing ones in Woodbridge, East Dereham, Eye, Sudbury, Thetford, Beccles, Swaffham, Newmarket, Lowestoft, Bungay and North Walsham.

