

FROM THE EDITOR



50 years on.

It was almost exactly fifty years ago that the first issue of 'Tabs' from whom Strandlight is directly descended, was produced by Strand Electric.

It was a pocket sized magazine, which continued in this form right up to the sixties, when, Fred Bentham, the Editor who while not actually the founder is the name always most associated with Tabs, retired and the torch was passed to Francis Reid. Francis introduced the A4 format, which continued under the guidance of Phil Rose and of your servant until a couple of years ago when we changed to the present format and more frequent publication.

Looking back at the early issues of Tabs the main thing I notice is the stress placed on information and assistance for the amateur.

It must be said that in the nineteen-thirties the amateurs needed more help than is the case today, because, unless I am wrong, in which case one of the three preceding Editors will smartly tell me, there were very few books on stage lighting available. Harold Ridge's epoch making book, which I believe first popularised the cyclorama, came out about this time and had the great virtue of being able to draw on his own imaginatively lit productions at the Cambridge's Festival Theatre, but I think there was little else.

Today we have Fred Bentham's 'The Art of Stage Lighting', Francis Reid's 'The Stage Lighting Handbook'. American enthusiasts are catered for by 'Scene Design and Stage Lighting', by Parker, Smith & Wolf and of course there is Richard Pilbrow's magnificent stage lighting book. I can't tell you the title because I didn't get a review copy and I was feeling mean at the time, but a super book by one of the world's great theatre lighting artists.

Amateurs - Are You Out There?

I must agree with Mark McMaster (see letters column) who has suggested that more articles from and for amateurs should be featured. If any amateur would like to let us know how he "lit the show", or to pass on any useful ideas, we would love to hear. Some black and white photos illustrating either the effect achieved or a method used would add immeasurably to readers understanding of the points made.

Or, if you have a production you are proud of but do not have time or the wish to write, please get in touch and we will try to work out an Editorial visit.

We offer a small stipend for articles accepted, but we take care to pitch it at a sufficiently modest level to avoid any charge of profligacy. And, perhaps obviously, our own products should star even if they do not constitute the entire cast. But then, as Mandy Rice Davis remarked, "They would, wouldn't they?"

Thoughts on the Editorial Tombstone.

When, in my first year with Strand, I saw Cinemoid being made, I had discovered my ideal memorial.

Cinemoid started life as a large cast block of colour, some six feet long and two and a half feet wide and about six inches thick. After cooling, it was laid flat and a giant carpenter's plane made passed over it, each pass peeling off a Cinemoid sheet.

My destined memorial was to be one of these cast pieces - No. 137 struck me as appropriate, suitably inscribed and set vertically in the soil of Bookham.

Well, now it will never be. Cinemoid is today made by a new continuous process. Still the deep and long lasting colour, still the non flammability, still the semi rigid thickness that makes it so easy to handle, but now at better value.

But never more the beautiful thick slab, so no Editorial memorial. See details of the new Strand Filters in special feature.

Letters to the Editor

Theatre Lighting in the Open Air

Dear Editor,

Strandlight definitely gives worldwide news of the goings on in respect of Theatre Lighting and other Trade news. The Journal is also giving an introduction to the various people and personalities within Strand Lighting all over the world, which is so nice to know.

I am, and have been, associated with the Rank Organisation for several years and my place of operation is Cyprus. However, I do a lot of travelling associated with the Entertainment business and Festivals and my work takes me into various Theatre Halls in some most unusual places and to my surprise I still see in use Lanterns manufactured by Strand some forty years ago... except that in some instances the lamp holders and trays have been changed to accept new lamps.

In my particular case, my work in the presentation of Live shows takes me to many open air Venues and in most cases to Ancient Roman or Greek Amphitheatres many of which are located around the coast of the Mediterranean. The question of sound at such venues has never been a problem, because of the way they were built and sited vis-a-vis the most atmospheric conditions of the area and the seasons they were used. In that respect all is excellent. However, these venues were at the time of their glory used during the day - relying on natural sunlight. Today, one has to light these Amphitheatres. How much knowhow could be offered and what are the best Lanterns to use, without spoiling the aesthetics of the Venue, whether these are Concerts, Musicals, Opera or a Shakespearean Comedy? I am sure that some Lighting designers have visited these or such venues and maybe we could have a paper on this interesting issue... I myself, have tried various lanterns from various angles, heights and distances, but I always say, "It could be better".

I am sure that there are people who would like some enlightenment on this particular type of Theatre Lighting.

Yours sincerely

V. H. Malian (alias Jimmy)
Larnaca, Cyprus.

Has any reader done any open air drama or light entertainment lighting? Our correspondent from Cyprus suggests an article on this subject. Unfortunately, England is blessed with too much rain to have much expertise available within the company on this subject. The only in-house comment was "water and electricity don't mix".

If any reader from sunnier climates has any experience, we would like to hear from them and to share their knowledge with other readers.

13 Laurelhill Road,
Lisburn,
Co. Antrim,
N. Ireland.

Dear Sir,

I would like to congratulate you for the latest edition of "Strandlight". As usual the journal made excellent and informative reading. The preview of new Strand equipment and the details of control systems installed in large theatres is most impressive. Although, working in a modest auditorium myself, I would like to see more articles like the school production of "Oklahoma!" in issue one.

The article about the A.B.T.T. trade show on page seven of the summer issue mentioned Strand Lighting sweaters incorporating the company logo. I wonder would it be possible to purchase a sweater from you. I would also be interested in any other items of Strand publicity that may be available.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
Mark McMaster

See Editors column for reply.

Yes Mark, sweaters, T shirts, zipper jackets and even baseball style caps are all available bearing the Strand Lighting name and Gongman logo. Strand offices, dealers and agents, have all size colour and price information.

The exterior of the Lombard Room Restaurant at Birmingham's Patrick Collection Motor Museum.



Fit to Light the Best

An Environ Project in Middle England at the Patrick Collection Motor Museum and Conference Centre.

I must confess that a summons to visit Birmingham was received with mixed feelings, even though that tremendous conurbation was the sometime home of the only extensive narrow gauge (3'6") tramway system in Great Britain. Indeed, it was vintage road transport, the second great enthusiasm of my life, that led me northward up the A5 on a recent summer morn.

I was to visit the Patrick Collection Motor Museum and Conference Centre at Kings



Interior of the Lombard Room Restaurant.

Norton, sited between historic canals in a surprisingly - to me - rural spot. Standing among weathered but re-furbished Victorian brick buildings and listening to bird song, one would never have guessed that one was only about three range lengths of a Birmingham Small Arms rifle from the Bull Ring.

As we are a lighting magazine I will not deal with the really superbly presented vehicles on display, except to applaud the settings. The time frame of the exhibits has been set by re-creating a war time 'incident' to set off an 8hp Austin canvas top pick up, and I came upon what I first thought to be my own kitchen, with its Easywork cabinet and New World cooker. It turned out it was recreating the world of 1930, so that's fair enough.

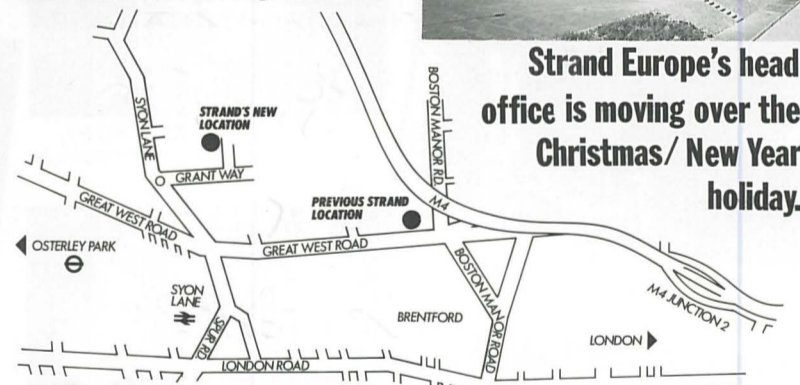
You will probably all by now have come across those life size effigys with a blank face on which is projected a film of a face so that the accompanying sound gives a life like, if static, effect? Well, Nigel Mansell chats with interviewer Bob Hall at the touch of a button so realistically that, at twenty yards, one could easily be fooled.

As part of the museum's complex there is a delightful restaurant - The Lombard Room - in which the lighting is most subtly controlled by 12 way plus two masters Environ system.

The special brass front plates have been mounted in wooden frames, and look first class - fully in keeping.

Twelve Environ Economy 4k dimmers lurk unobtrusively in the servery, but with plenty of ventilation. So much fairer treatment of any dimmer than hiding them in a cupboard that can all too easily become too hot. Please remember - we recommend a maximum 30°C for all Strand dimmers if they are to enjoy a long and healthy life.

Strand Goes West



Strand Europe's head office is moving over the Christmas/ New Year holiday.

Strand has been moving westward since the company was founded in 1914. First our head office moved from Covent Garden to Woodger Road in Shepherds Bush for a few months after we became part of The Rank Organisation, then we joined Rank Audio Visual at our present Brentford offices.

Now we are moving again, although this time only about half a mile further west.

Our new address from January 4th 1988 will be:

**Strand Lighting Limited,
Grant Way (off Syon Lane),
Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 5QD**

Telephone, Telex and Fax numbers all remain as at present.

Our next issue will tell all about the premises and how we are settling in.

We Make the Front Cover!

Susan Dandridge, Product Manager for Controls, was pictured on the front of the October issue of "Lighting and Sound International".

This widely circulated monthly also devoted an inside colour feature to our Bristol Spectacular



Electro Controls & Strand Lighting

The Rank Organisation acquired the Salt Lake City based Electro Controls company some two years ago. Now Electro have taken their place in the Strand Lighting international family and their very interesting range of architectural and entertainment lighting control products is available, outside the U.S.A., from Strand's depots, agents and dealers world wide.

In the U.S.A. a separate sales and distribution network is being maintained.

The Bristol conference, attended by Jody Good III & Rick White, the R & D and Sales chiefs respectively from Electro, provided the occasion for the introduction of the Electro Controls range to Strand and its dealers.

Revised Act 3 Dimmer Packs

These feature three 5kW dimmers with 25A circuit breaker protection. Analogue, multiplex and slave versions are all offered.

Act 3 Analogue has six faders - as used in Act 6. When a slave pack is connected the remaining three faders control the slaves dimmers.

In the Multiplex version one master fader can be allocated to control any dimmer in the master or in the slave pack, or all dimmers at once.

Act 3 is rated for 45A continuous operation and meets BS and VDE RFI standards.



Quartzcolor News

Coming soon from Quartzcolor, the new compact HMI Ballast. Available in 575 watt, 1200 watt, and 2500 watt versions, in both 120 volt, 60Hz and 220/224 volt, 50Hz models.

As a result of new and improved technology the size and weight of these ballasts have been reduced making them easier to handle and more space efficient.

All models are equipped with a special low-noise circuit to allow ignition re-strikes under quiet production conditions.

