

BEHIND THE CAMERA-

DAVID SAMUELSON'S TECHNICAL PAGE

WHO'S FOR 2.39 : 1 ?

In these days of inflation it's nice to hear of things going down but not everything that goes up or down is necessarily about money.

When we were redrawing the lines of the lens test charts in our camera test room recently, I looked up the Standards relating to 35mm Projectionable Image Areas to make the dimensions an exact multiple of the ground glass markings.

It so happens we choose 48 times this Projectionable Image Area because that is about the minimum size you can conveniently photograph with some zoom lenses at wide angle and minimum focussing distance.

On looking up the Standards I found that British Standard BS5550: Subsection 3.2.2. of 1979 and International Standard of ISO 2907 of 1972 (which are the same) give the height of the projectionable image area of 35mm motion picture frame for anamorphic presentation as 0.717in., (18.21) max.

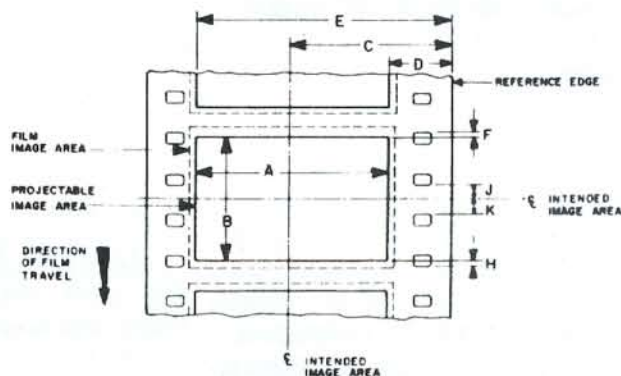
I then looked up the American Standard PH22.195 of 1977, titled 'dimensions of projectionable image area on 35mm motion picture prints' and discovered that they gave the height for 'Theatrical release prints with an anamorphic image' as 0.700in. (17.78mm) max. 2½% smaller top to bottom than the British and ISO standards.

That's funny I thought.

To clarify the situation I telephoned the SMPTE H.Q. in New York and spoke to their Engineering Services Manager, Alex Alden whose department is the Secretariat for American cinematograph standards on behalf of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and of the International Standards Organisation Working Group 036 and asked him, "was it true that the United States has deviated from the international standards, and if so why?"

"Yes," he replied. It was true and the reason quite simply is that American theatres are working to the 0.700in. frame height so as not to show splices on the screen and that he expects that when the ISO Committee, of which he is the Chairman, meets in Brussels later this year, they will fall into line. In which case no doubt the British Standards will, in its turn, follow the ISO.

As the height of the anamorphic frame in the camera remains at 0.732 ± 0.008 in., (18.60 \pm 0.20mm) (British, American and ISO) it seems we have a situation, albeit not nearly as bad, as with wide screen where the projectionist in the cinema has some control of framing at the presentation stage.



Projectable Area on Film as Seen through Film toward Lens

We at Samuelsons are having some new ground glasses made for all our Panavision cameras conforming to the new standard and anybody who wishes, can take those in preference to the existing type.

Hiding the splices is not the only reason for giving more head room. If any Camera Operator wishes to really horrify himself he should go and see a film at the Odeon, Marble Arch, supposedly one of the best and most modern cinemas in Britain. They have a deeply curved 'Dimension 150' screen there with the projectors situated on a level below the centre line of the screen so that they project upwards towards it.

As a result the centre of the top of the frame area is completely lost in order to show picture in the top left and right hand corners. I recently saw a film there which showed three men full length walking along side by side where the centre man was decapitated and the outer two had their feet amputated.

There is no doubt that the reason why the majority of major pictures these days are shot in the anamorphic format are two-fold. Firstly, it looks that bit more spectacular on the screen and secondly when the film is subsequently shown on T.V. especially in the United States and Britain, where the picture is 'panned and scanned' before presentation, you have 'close-ups' which really are 'close-ups' which is better for T.V. than a film which has been composed for 1.85:1 and which when shown on T.V. is a pimple with lots of space above and below.

As we all know, one should never overlook the importance of T.V. presentation for undoubtedly T.V. residuals form an important part of the financing of most major features.

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INFORMATION RECEIVED

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Lighting Cameraman:

Peter Suchitsky

Operator: Kelvin Pike

Focus Puller: Maurice Arnold

Clapper Loader: Peter Robinson

Grip: Denis Lewis

2nd Camera

Operator: David Garfath

Focus Puller: Chris Tanner

Clapper Loader: Madelyn Most

Grip: Brian Osborne

Norwegian Unit

Cameraman: Geoff Glover

Operator: Bob Smith

Focus Puller: John Campbell

Mike Brewster

Clapper Loader: John Keen

Greg Dupre

Grip: Frank Batt

N.B. Director of Norwegian Unit is Peter MacDonald of Camera Department fame.

OMAR MUKHTAR

Lighting Cameraman:

Jack Hildyard

Operators: Jimmy Turrell

James Bawden

Focus Pullers: Dave Worley

Roger McDonald

Clapper Loaders: Eammon O'Keefe

Steve Keith-Roach

Grip: Peter Butler

Camera Maintenance:

Norman Godden

SOS TITANIC

Lighting Cameraman:

Chris Challis BSC

Operator: John Palmer

Focus Puller: Tony Strachan

Clapper Loader: Mike Bulley

Grip: Ray Hall

THE HUSSY

Lighting Cameraman:

Keith Goddard

Operator: Peter Sinclair

Focus Puller: John Simmons

Clapper Loader: Mike Metcalfe

Grip: Malcolm Smith

YESTERDAY'S SONG

Cameraman: Alex Thomson

Camera Operator: Mike Fox

Focus Puller: Keith Blake

Grip: Jim Kane

YESTERDAY'S HERO

Cameraman: Brian West

Camera Operator: Ken Withers

Focus Puller: David Lenham

Clapper Loader: Martin Hume

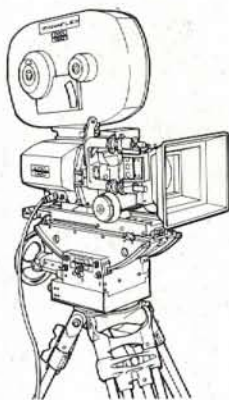
Grip: Dennis Fraser

We must apologise for a couple of boobs in these columns in our last issue: The Lighting Cameraman on 'SCUM' was given as Douglas Hill; it is in fact Phil Mebeux. Also the Grip slot on 'THE BITCH' is not occupied by Jake Wright. The name should have read: Dennis Frazer. Expressions of abject contrition to all concerned.

DISCONTINUED LINES

Our more vigilant readers will note that a couple of regular items are absent from these pages: Hawkeye (understandably keeping a low profile?) and Inserts.

Save those gratified sighs—they'll be back. The usual excuses apply: Pressure of space, pressure of time ... pressure.



The Panaflex-X

Originally conceived as a low cost, second camera to back up the regular Panaflex now used on the majority of feature films made in the United States and Europe, the Panaflex-X is now available as a principal camera in its own right.

As a 'spare tyre' to a Panaflex principal camera, the Panaflex-X costs only £100 per day, £300 per week*, complete with a standard matte box/sunshade.

As all the regular Panaflex accessories—magazines, lenses and batteries etc.—fit the Panaflex-X, it may also be used as a second camera when necessity demands.

As a 'first camera' the Panaflex-X has virtually all the most desirable features of a regular Panaflex—studio quietness with any lens (zoom or otherwise) and without a lens blimp, a 200-500° shutter adjustable in-shot while the camera is running etc.—except that it is not hand-holdable.

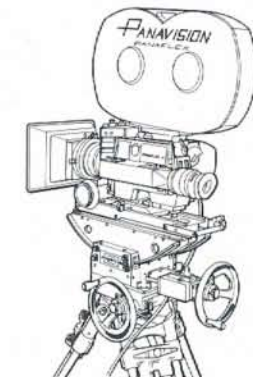
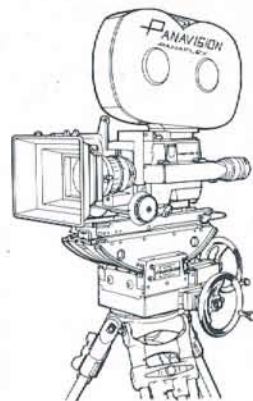
With the new straight-through 'brighter than life' viewfinder Panavision have achieved a remarkable breakthrough in image brightness. It is now possible to see shadow detail in the viewfinder which is not visible to the naked eye.

As a 'on-its-own' principal camera the costs of a Panaflex-X outfit could be as little as £189 per day, £567* per week for the camera COMPLETE with 3x500ft. magazines, Panaflex follow-focus control, 2 x 24V batteries and a charger AND a 20-100mm T3.1 Super Panazoom lens with a suitable matte box and with Silent Electronic Zoom Control.

In popular marketing parlance it is 'X-ceptional' value for money.

*At an exchange rate \$2 = £1, subject to change.

Available from Samuelsons of London



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