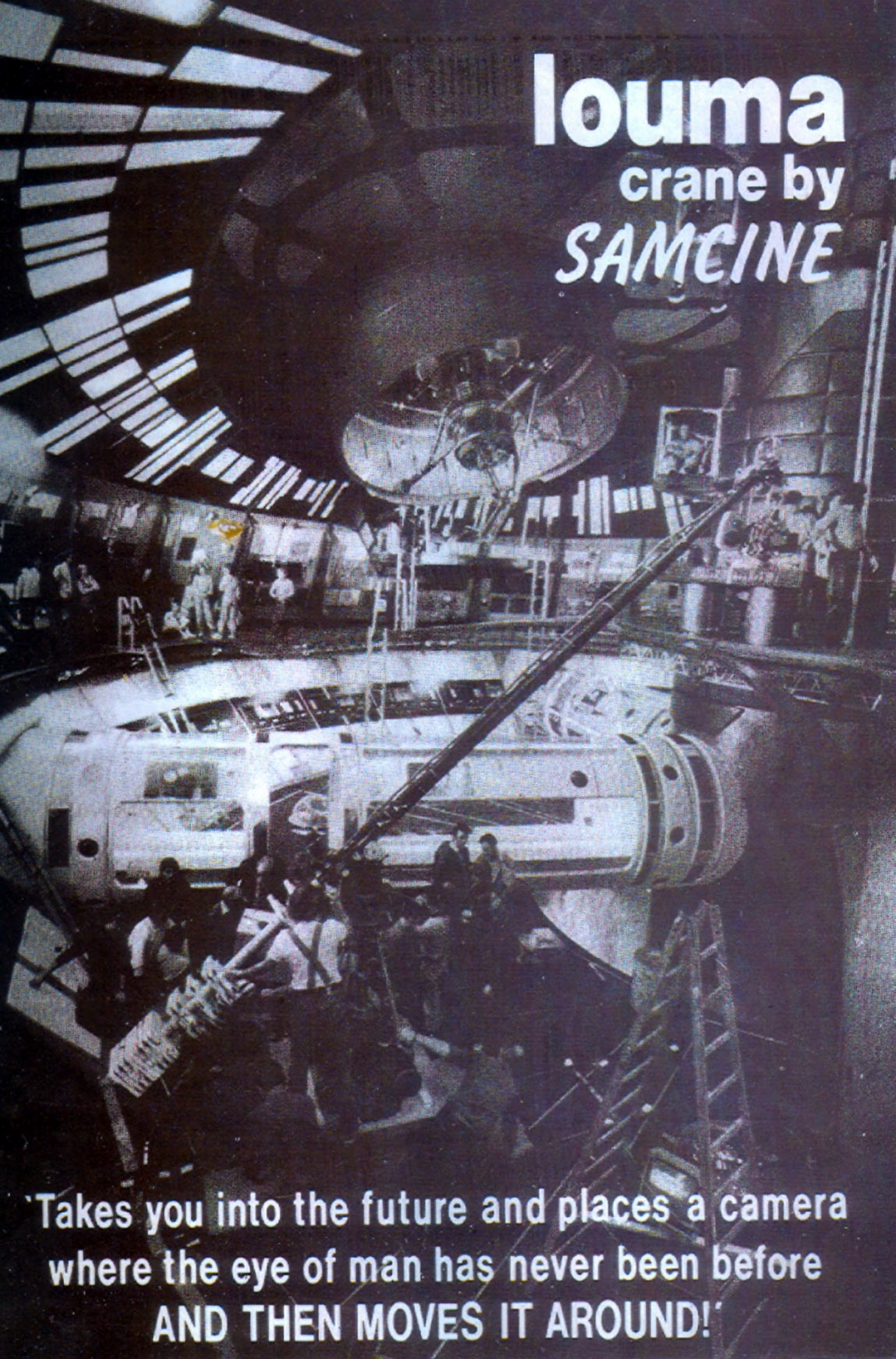

OSCAR
SCRAP BOOK


louma
crane by
SAMCINE
'Takes you into the future and places a camera
where the eye of man has never been before
AND THEN MOVES IT AROUND!'

ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES
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December 15, 2004

Mr. David Samuelson
7, Montagu Mews West
London W1H 1TF
United Kingdom

Re: Academy Award of Merit

Dear Mr. Samuelson:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Academy Board of Governors has voted to upgrade the 1980 Scientific and Engineering Award presented to **Jean-Pierre Lavalou, Alain Masseron** and **you** for the engineering and development of the Louma Camera Crane and remote system for motion picture production, to an Academy Award of Merit (Oscar Statuette).

Sci/Tech Committee Chairman, Richard Edlund, will be in touch in the near future with more details, but for now please mark Saturday evening, **February 12, 2005**, on your calendar. It is then that you and a guest will be invited to attend the Scientific and Technical Awards Dinner and Ceremony at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. This is a black-tie event that has become the premiere highlight of our Oscar season and at which your award will be presented.

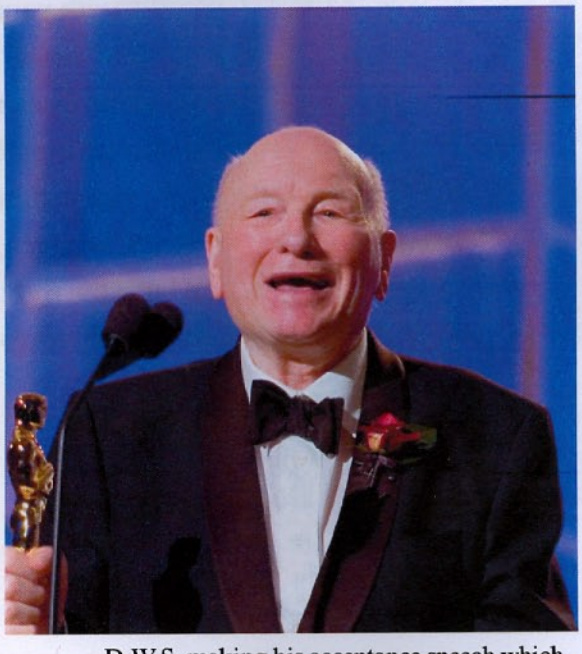
Also, it affords me the opportunity of offering my congratulations in person.

Cordially,

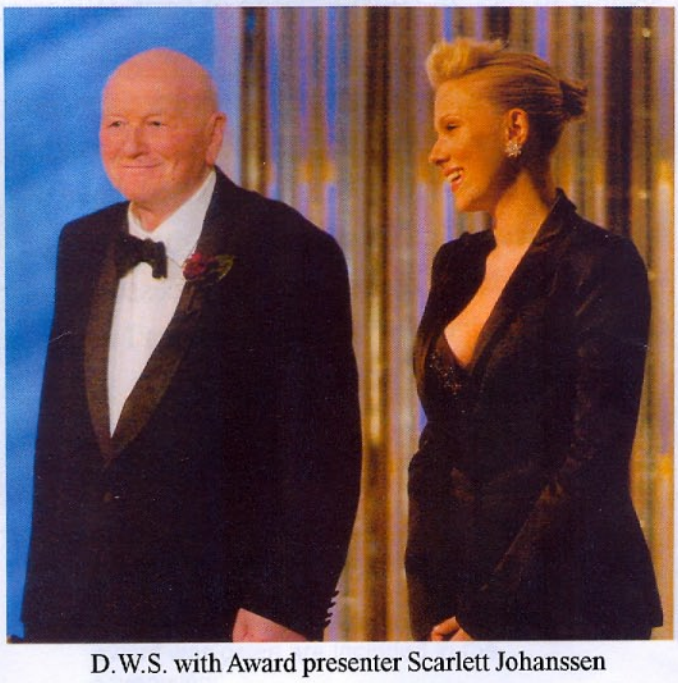
Frank Pierson
President

FP/rm

Jean Marie Lavalou making his acceptance speech, Alain Masseron, D.W.S. and Scarlet Johannesson who made the presentation

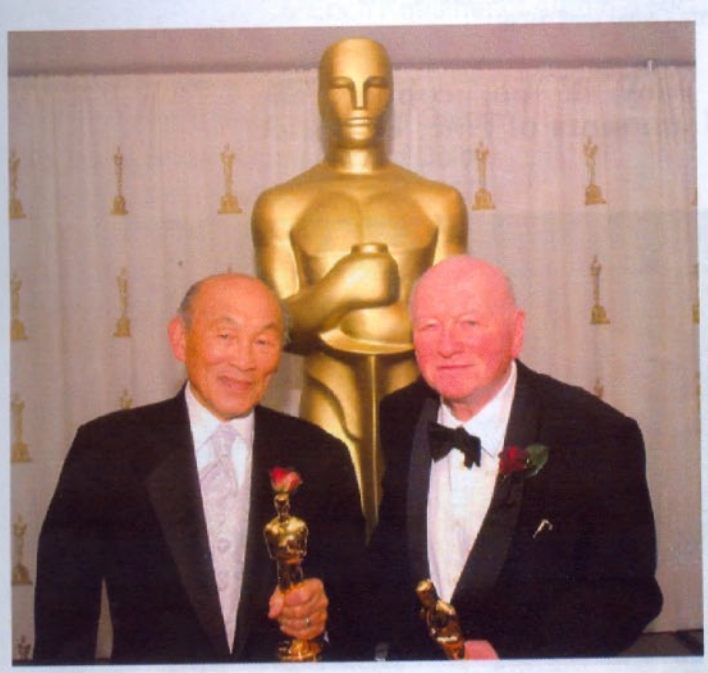


D.W.S. making his acceptance speech which he began by saying 'It's like having a new baby in the family ... only this one had a 25 year period of gestation!'



D.W.S. with Award presenter Scarlett Johanssen

Group photograph of all those who received Academy SCITEC awards that evening. D.W.S is sitting on the left next to the Academy President. During the evening 9 Certificates of Achievement and 2 Technical Achievement awards were also made



D.W.S. with Tak Miyagishima, his good friend at Panavision for fourty years, who won the Gordon Sawyer Lifetime Achievement award

D.W S. holding his Oscar alongside the remote control head for which he won it.

Academy Award of Merit

The official name of the Oscar statuette is the "Academy Award of Merit." It was designed by Cedric Gibbons, chief art director at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and sculpted by Los Angeles artist George Stanley. The Oscar statuette depicts a knight, holding a crusader's sword, standing on a reel of film. The film reel features five spokes, signifying the five original branches of the Academy (actors, directors, producers, technicians and writers.)

Each statuette is made from the alloy britannium and is then plated in copper, nickel silver, and finally, 24-karat gold.

Each statuette stands 13-1/2 inches tall and weighs 8-1/2 pounds.

Since the initial awards banquet on May 16, 1929, through the 74th Academy Awards Presentation on March 24, 2002, 2,455 statuettes have been presented.

How Oscar received his nickname is not exactly clear. The most popular story is that Margaret Herrick, an Academy employee and eventual executive director, remarked that the statuette resembled her Uncle Oscar, and the Academy staff began to refer to it by that name. Whatever the actual origin of the nickname, it was well enough known by 1934 that Walt Disney supposedly used it during an acceptance speech that year. Although journalists used the nickname with increasing frequency during the late 1930s, the Academy didn't officially use the name Oscar until 1939.

Academy Award of

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy Foundation

Britannia metal, a white alloy of tin, copper, anc antimony, usually with small amounts of zinc, etc., usec for tableware.

D.W.S. with son Adam who used the Louma crane on such pictures as *Yentil, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Harry Potter 2, Troy* and *Harry Potter 4*

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Image technology

BKSTS The Moving Image Society

Oscar Award

Oscar for Samuelson's Louma Camera Crane

It was interesting to see that the creators of two camera crane systems were awarded Oscars® by the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Academy's annual Scientific and Technical Awards dinner on February 12 2005.

Horst Burbulla received an Oscar for the creation and development of the Technocrane telescoping camera crane, which in many ways redefined camera crane technology, and, of particular interest to BKSTS readers, Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and David Samuelson (Past President and Honorary Life Fellow of the BKSTS) received Oscars for engineering and developing the Louma Camera Crane and remote system for motion picture production, which has served as the inspiration for many subsequent remote camera systems. The Louma pioneered a remotely-operated camera head combined with a lightweight and portable modular crane. Its design has proved to be the inspiration for numerous subsequent remote camera systems.

As many readers will know, the Louma crane has been an essential tool in film-making for many years now, and it first gained recognition by the Academy in 1980 with the award of an Academy Plaque. Unlike other Academy Awards, however, achievements receiving Scientific and Technical Awards do not have to have been developed and introduced during 2004. Devices are only considered for Sci-Tech Awards 'if they have a proven track record of continued and successful use in the film industry,' a condition which the Louma crane is obviously well qualified to meet.

Congratulations to Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and David Samuelson on receiving a well-deserved award - the upgrade to a full Oscar has long been merited. David Samuelson was absolutely delighted when he told me that Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and himself were about to have their 1980 Academy plaque awards upgraded to full Oscars, and said 'it's a better feeling, even, than being upgraded on a trans-Atlantic aircraft!'

ABOUT THE LOUMA MODULAR CAMERA CRANE

The Louma Camera Crane is a "generic" invention, it being the first modular camera crane with a remote control head of any kind or make.

The Louma pioneered the following:

- The first ever long reach portable camera crane. Previously all long reach camera cranes had had to be mounted on heavy trucks or vehicle chassis-like bases.
- The first ever camera crane that could be broken down into small elements, each of which could be carried by hand so that it could be set-up and used in locations inaccessible or unsuitable for heavy equipment.
- The first ever camera crane that could be dipped down steeply into a set to make 360° panning possible.
- The first ever camera crane to incorporate a remotely controlled camera mounting.
- The first ever remotely controlled head that emulated a normal hand-wheel type geared camera head.
- The first ever camera mounting and control system ever to depend upon a video assist as the only means of viewfinding.
- The first remote camera head to incorporate a facility to rotate the camera about the third axis.
- The first ever remote control camera head to incorporate multiple slip-rings for power and control transmission so that the camera could be panned, tilted and turned over without restriction.
- The first ever remote control camera head to incorporate a 'witness' video camera to enable the focus assistant to see exactly what the focus, zoom and aperture settings are.
- The first camera crane to incorporate a communications system for all the crew members.

In a more recent development it incorporates the first ever remote control to incorporate 'back-pan compensation' to automatically keep the camera orientated in a single direction as the boom arm is swung from side to side.

While it is true that only seven pre-production type LOUMA camera cranes were ever made, this was only due to the fact that the Samuelson Group were principally interested in equipment rental, so in introducing a completely new and innovative item of equipment it was prudent to make a relatively small pre-production batch to find out what the potential users would make of it. Unfortunately it was inadequately patented and by the time it was realised what an important development this was, film equipment companies all over the world were making 'Louma look-alikes'. It is interesting to note that almost all of the imitators made either a demountable crane arm or an electronic geared head. Very few made a complete unit as Samuelsons had had to do. 'If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then the Louma's cup truly runneth over'. It is probably true to say that more companies now manufacture modular camera cranes and / or remote control heads than manufacture any other single item of motion picture production equipment.

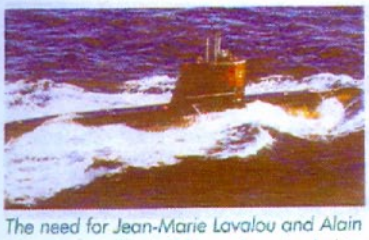
Oscar Award

Jean-Marie Lavalou (left), Alain Masseron (centre) and David Samuelson were awarded Oscar® statuettes for the engineering and development of the Louma Camera Crane and remote system for motion picture production.

There are very few innovative developments or items of equipment in the history of cinematography that have pervaded the studio floor more than have modular camera cranes fitted with remotely controlled heads. One type or another is used on virtually every major film production. AND THE LOUMA CAMERA CRANE WAS THE FIRST. It changed for ever the way films can be made and the shots that are possible.

THE ORIGINS OF THE LOUMA CAMERA CRANE

In 1970, two young French documentary cameramen, Jean-Marie Lavalou and Alain Masseron, were making a film inside a submarine and wanted to do a tracking shot down the length of the ship, passing through bulkheads and jibbing sideways as they went to look at various crew members working at their stations. Sometimes the camera would pass through openings and gaps between instruments until it ended up in the forward torpedo compartment where the off-duty crew were having their meal break sitting either side of a long table surrounded by torpedoes. When it reached the table the camera tilted down to look at the food on the table - typically French!



The need for Jean-Marie Lavalou and Alain Masseron to film inside a submarine led to the development of the Louma crane.

This was before the "Steadicam" floating camera system was invented, and they needed something more steady than a simple (shaky) hand-held camera.

They did the shot by mounting the camera on a gyro tripod head on the end of a long pole, itself mounted on a heavy duty gyro tripod head, on a narrow dolly, on narrow tracks laid along the whole length of the submarine and high enough above the floor to clear the thresholds of the bulkheads they had to pass through. When the camera reached the forward torpedo compartment, and just before it reached the final bulkhead, one of them started the camera on its gyro head tilting down and when it had passed through the opening the other of them popped out and kept the move going. (With an 18mm or 25mm ultra wide angle lens on it is amazing what you can get away with!)

They realised that they had the genesis of a very useful piece of equipment so they took it to the leading camera rental company in Paris, Samuelson Alga Cinema, who agreed to give them support and the use of their engineering facilities. Second and third prototypes were made in France, during which time the concept was improved upon and developed, and the time then came to make drawings and to manufacture a limited pre-production batch.

At this time the project was brought to Samuelson Film Service Ltd in London where there was a much larger design, development and manufacturing department. During the design stage David Samuelson realised that in general service the usage would not be limited just to wide angle shots, as it was on the submarine, and so to make it possible to use the crane, even with a 10:1 zoom lens on the camera, it was decided to always use a video assist viewfinder system with the camera (then a quite new and not generally available facility). It was also decided to provide an electronic remote pan and tilt system with hand wheels which emulated a normal geared head as an integral part of the outfit. No such thing as this existed at that time and this too had to be developed and designed.

At that time too, remote lens focus and zoom controls, a witness camera to aid remote lens control, an intercom system, a control console and a custom designed dolly were also added. The design and development of the electronic geared head and the other electronic features was done in Paris by Hervé Theys of Samuelson Alga Cinema.

The advantages of the new camera crane system were manifest. Never before was it possible to dismantle a crane into carryable pieces and hand-carry it upstairs to work from a balcony or to place it on the top of a parallel or tower and then dip it down steeply into a scene, to be able to do 360° pans without the camera operator having to traverse with the camera, and then jib up to almost twice the height of the crane-arm fulcrum point above the ground.

In 1980 Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and David Samuelson were awarded a Scientific and Engineering Award (an Academy plaque) by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 'for the engineering and development of the Louma Camera Crane and remote control system for motion picture production', and we are delighted to be able to share their celebrations as the Academy took the decision to upgrade the award to their Award of Merit, an Oscar, for achievements which have changed the way films are made or exhibited.

Jim Slater, with thanks to David Samuelson

BRITISH CINEMATOGRAPHER
INCORPORATING EYEPIECE
ESSENTIAL READING FOR FILM MAKERS

David Samuelson with his Oscar, accompanied by Scarlett Johansson. Louma Cranes have recently been employed by Adam Samuelson on ***Troy*** *and* ***Harry Potter***

>> SAMUELSON COLLECTS TECHNICAL OSCAR

David Samuelson was among the recipients of this year's Scientific and Technical Awards (Sci-Tech), also known as technical Oscars, given by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (AMPAS).

Samuelson, along with Jean-Marie Lavalou and Alain Masseron from Paris, collected the award for the engineering and development of the Louma Camera Crane and remote system for motion picture production. The name Louma is derived from the names of Lavalou and Masseron. In the 1970s their company, Louma, pioneered a remotely-operated camera head combined with a lightweight and portable modular crane, and approached Samuelson to help bring the system to market via Samuelson Film Services in London and Paris. Its design has proven to be the inspiration for numerous subsequent remote camera systems, and Louma systems are in operation on feature films, TV commercials and music videos today.

Speaking about his award to British cinematographer, Samuelson commented: "This sort of thing doesn't come easily. The AMPAS committee are very eminent and very technical, and go through things with a fine toothed comb." Samuelson noted the contributions of Derek Lee the design engineer at Samuelson Film Service Ltd in London who did the mechanical design, Hervé Theyés, the company's electronic engineer in Paris who devised the electronic geared head and other electronics of the unit, and Joe Dunton who developed the video viewfinder that was an essential component of the whole system.

"Had I had more than 45 seconds on the podium I would have also thanked Steven Poster who brought the device to the attention of Steven Spielberg who used it throughout his next production in the US *1941*, Bill Fraker the DP on that picture, and finally, Andy Romanoff, an American cameraman who first saw it at a jazz concert in France and brought it to America and became the first Loma technician there."

Oscar statuettes were also won by Horst Burbulla for the creation and continuing development of the Technocrane telescoping camera crane. The Technocrane has redefined the state-of-the-art in camera technology, with its electronically-driven levelling head, adjustable moveable weight carriage, and lightweight, extremely precise telescoping beam elements that allow camera movement during shots. Gyula Mester and Keith Edwards also picked up Academy plaques for their significant contributions to the continuing development of the Technocrane telescoping camera.

Actress Scarlett Johansson presented the 2004 Sci-Tech Awards at a gala black tie dinner on Saturday, February 12, 2005, at the Ritz-Carlton Huntington Hotel in Pasadena, California.