

SamScene

TAKE 1

THE HOUSE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAMUELSON GROUP PLC

DECEMBER 1984



EDITOR'S BIT

'Ere tis, as they say down my way – your own eagerly awaited newsletter to inform and amuse you!

For future editions I would very much like to hear about anything going on in our Group that would be of interest to other members of staff – births, engagements, promotions or even vicious rumours!

So don't be shy – ring me on ext. 282 (Samcine House) – put it in the Internal – or pop up to Publications.

My thanks to all the contributors (even Micky Gratton!) to this first edition of SamScene, as "without them, it would just not have been possible".

Happy Hols!

Ann Stirling

Talking of Christmas, some of you, while doubtless appreciating the gift, may have no use for your turkey (if for instance you are vegetarian, like me!). If you would like to donate it to a home for deaf children and help them have a happy time, please contact me *before Friday* and I will make the arrangements.

DID YOU KNOW

... that we are giving the equipment for a film entitled "Kicking the Habit" on the subject of heroin addiction? Martin Cayser is dealing with it for us.

LEN WATTS Hero of the Skies?

Len Watts, our resident Tyler Mount expert had a scary experience on a plane recently – and for once he wasn't working at the time!

He was on the way back from Tunis where he had been assisting with a Tyler Gyro platform for 'Pirates' being directed by Roman Polanski.

15 minutes outside of Nice, Len was settling back with a whisky and awaiting the inevitable meal when there was a loud explosion and the plane started to drop out of the sky. One of the two engines had blown up! Luckily the plane didn't drop much although it slowed down considerably, and they were able to coast to Nice airport.

Len tells us the passengers stayed

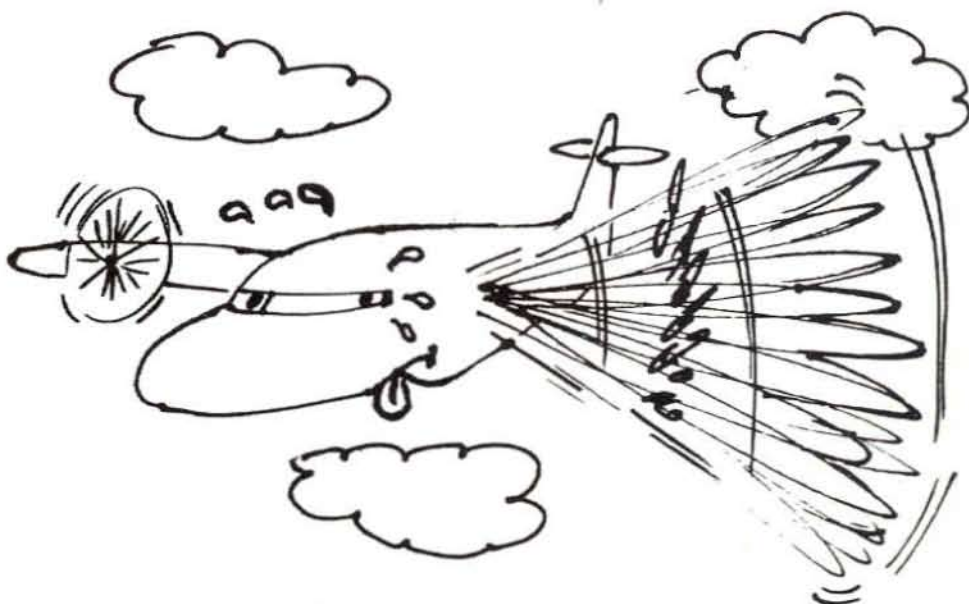
fairly calm, although the hostesses looked very scared, and needless to say there was enthusiastic applause on touchdown.

After a two hour wait in Nice most of the passengers were flown on, although 16 people, including Len, had to stay overnight.

Apart from Len, the stricken aircraft was also carrying rushes for the film 'Plenty' – for which Sammies supplied all the gear – so the crew and passengers were not the only ones grateful for the plane's safe touchdown.

Len, of course, does a lot of flying and has been in some tricky situations whilst working – simple things like running out of fuel and a near collision with an army plane, but it's the first time he's ever had a problem whilst on a scheduled flight.

Well, Len, we hope all your future problems are Tyler ones!



SAMMIES BREAKS INTO STAGE AND LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

from Jonathan Samuelson

"You may have heard that Samuelson Group has been expanding its activities in a number of ways over the past few months. I would like to take this opportunity to explain what has been happening.

Firstly, I should tell you why we have carried out these changes. What we set out to do is, using 'City' terminology, broaden our base. We want to have a situation where a downturn in one side of our company will not have a dramatic effect on the Group as a whole. By diversifying in this way we can establish a stable operation. The good times being experienced by one company within the Group will allow another company, which may be less busy, to 'tread water' for a spell.

4½ Acres on the Thames

In March of this year we acquired *Bray Studios*. Bray is a four and a half acre studio complex in Berkshire. As many of you have seen, it is based around a 17th century listed mansion with grounds running down to the banks of the River Thames. It is a freehold property with one very large soundproof stage (10,000 sq feet with 35 feet height), three other smaller stages, 45 production offices, a recording and dubbing studio, a bar, a restaurant and other facilities necessary to service a fully operational film studio. Gerry Anderson's highly successful 'Terrahawks' series was entirely made at Bray. Most of the major TV commercial production houses use our stages on a regular basis, and Euston Films — the film making arm of Thames Television — took up residence on December 3rd to prepare and shoot a major new television series called "Paradise Postponed". Studio and location shooting will be based at Bray with a 39 week schedule starting in March of next year. Part of the attraction of owning a film studio is that it provides considerable extra work for our existing companies. Samuelson Lighting Limited and Samuelson Film Service London Ltd. have both seen the benefits of the Bray acquisition in terms of increased turnover. The Euston Films shoot will involve cameras, lighting and other services supplied by our Group. We have recently obtained planning permission to build a second large sound stage, and we hope to start work on this in the early part of next year.

Sammies goes Pop

In May of 1984 we acquired *Zenith Lighting Ltd*. This was an acquisition away from the film and television industry, in that Zenith are one of the leading companies in Europe in the field of theatrical and show lighting. In particular they specialise in the supply of lighting rigs for live pop music shows. They provided the rigs for the European tours of Stevie Wonder, Yes, Culture Club, Wham! as well as for Frank Sinatra and for the Glyndebourne Opera's Touring Company. Zenith are currently

in their old building in Chelsea but they will shortly be moving to newly refurbished premises on the Production Village site.

Dallas Export

Shortly after we acquired Zenith Lighting we obtained the exclusive distribution rights in the UK, Europe, Africa, the Soviet block and most of Asia to a computer-controlled multi-colour lighting system for theatrical and live presentation shows. The system is manufactured in Dallas by a subsidiary of Showco, and is called *Vari-Lite*. I am delighted to say that our rental stock is now booked solidly until May of 1985, and we have had to bring more lamps in from Dallas in order to meet demand. Although we have had Vari-Lites for a relatively short time, they have already worked on a number of big shows including: Eric Clapton, Lee Towers, Michel Sardou, The Scorpions, Peter Massey, Chess, Johnny Halliday, Al Jarreau, Wham!, Culture Club, Thompson Twins, Kool and the Gang as well as on various video productions.

Theatre Rental

Our most recent acquisition has been the rental side of *Theatre Projects Ltd*. A new company to be called Theatre Projects Services Ltd has been formed, and Samuelson Group will own 75 per cent of it with the original Theatre Projects Company owning the remaining 25 per cent. We have an option to purchase that 25 per cent in the future

if we want to. The cost of this deal was in excess of £1.6 million. We have also obtained a minority stake in Theatre Projects Ltd which provides consultancy advice to the theatrical industry, its Chairman, Richard Pilbrow, being perhaps the foremost authority in this field in the world.

The Zenith Lighting, Vari-Lite and Theatre Projects acquisitions mean that Samuelson Group plc is now the largest supplier of theatrical, live entertainment, lighting and sound equipment in the world.

There are other acquisitions that we are considering at the present time. These are film industry orientated, details of which will be announced in due course.

Banks and Stocks

I would also like to mention some changes that have been made concerning Samuelson Group plc and its professional advisers in the City of London. We have recently appointed *Messrs. County Bank* to be our merchant bankers. They are one of the leading merchant banks and are particularly expert in the leisure and communications industries, they are the merchant banking arm of National Westminster Bank plc. We have also appointed *Messrs. James Capel & Company* to be our stockbrokers. For the past eight years James Capel have topped the independent listing of stockbrokers prepared by the Continental Illinois Bank. They are the largest and most widely respected firm of stockbrokers in the City.

ROGER HAGAN RETIRES

An unsung 'back-room' star of many a box-office hit must be *Roger Hagan* who officially retired from the camera department on November 20. We thank him for his seventeen years work with Samuelsons and are glad to say he will be returning to the camera department on a part-time basis.



DID YOU KNOW

... every other week Sammies (Debbie Nyman, really!) organises a free film show at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. One show for the children at 6.00 p.m. followed by another at 8.30 p.m. for the nurses. Last year, Karl Roberts of Samuelson Communications was Projectionist of the Year; this year the award goes to Debbie herself. But more volunteers are welcome. Since 1970 we have shown more than 700 films at the hospital.

This year, over the holiday period from Boxing Day to December 30th; Gareth in our Camera Department, and Bernie, Karl, Charlie and Mark from Sam Communications have all agreed to be projectionists at the hospital. (Pretty good effort in my view — MEWS)

ELAINE SMASH HIT

A great step forward in 16mm film making has been taken with the launch in June this year, of Panavision's Panaflex-16, affectionately known as Elaine.

At last, there is available to camera crews, sound recordists, directors and producers a quiet, self-blinded, studio rig or hand-held film camera complete with video assist and numerous accessories.

HTV Bristol have just completed their 11-week schedule on "Jenny's War" right on time, using this remarkable new 16mm system, and other television companies have fed back to us positively glowing reports about their achievements on various assignments using Elaine. Tyne-Tees TV used two cameras during the week of December 3 — 9 on "Operation Julie".

John Rendall

DID YOU KNOW

... that we've supplied equipment at no charge for pilot commercials to two young, talented directors, on first time assignments with two different companies, to put something very special into their showreels?

FLIGHTS FOR BIRMINGHAM

No, not another aeroplane story; it's a case of cases this time. As from January 7th 1985 Samcine Cases are opening up in Birmingham and will be producing wooden flight cases under the able leadership of Ron Regan.

Good news for Communications Birmingham, and lots of others we hope! Samcine Cases (Birmingham) Ltd will be situated at: 309 Jubilee Trade Centre, 130 Sherlock Street, Birmingham B5. Tel: 021-622 5968

DID YOU KNOW

... we have adopted a student from Harrow Film School for the third year running — hopefully to help her make a niche in our industry?

Our own page 3 pin-up, Barry Measure.



"TALKING 'BOUT MY DELEGATION"

The 'Big Apple' certainly got a bit bruised when Barry Measure, John Rendall, Karl Kelly and Bill Woodhouse of SFS London Ltd visited New York in early November for the annual conference of SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers).

Barry recalls the less technical victories our team notched up while away.

"Well folks, I've had some bad trips in my time but this was far out. We flew Virgin Airlines; non-stop pop promos and vinyl food, instead of the usual mere plastic stuff. The no smoking signs displayed pictures of large herbal cigarettes, billowing clouds of purple smoke and if you weren't deafened by the pop music you were blinded by the light show.

On reaching Newark we asked a hobo to call us a cab — "You're a cab" he said. We began our journey into downtown New York. The traffic was diabolical; our driver explained that the New York Jets had been playing. Karl replied in his best British accent "I assume that's why the streets are so wet". The cabbie pulled a 45 and explained about American Football.

By this time we had reached uptown Manhattan, which is downtown New York — around about mid-town — I think. At each set of traffic lights groups of youths rushed out into the traffic to wash the car windows for a fee of one dollar. After this had happened for the fifteenth time, I asked the cabbie why he never refused the services of these over-helpful lads. The driver pulled a sawn-off pump action shot gun and explained that there were two courses of action one could take. One was to have the windows washed; the other was to refuse and get the smashed ones repaired. 'Oh!' I said, pleased to know we were secure in his hands as I settled myself back under my seat with the others who inexplicably seemed to have suddenly undergone some type of religious conversion.

Eventually the cab driver pulled up outside our hotel, closely followed by the cab. After relieving us of all our travellers cheques he covered us with a 30mm mortar as we dashed across the sidewalk into the hotel lobby.

When we had booked in we made our way to the hotel bar. Four days later we left the bar to return to Olde Englands, after a very successful trip. We agreed with one mind (mine) that the high spot was drinking the Lee's contingent under the table on not less than three occasions; an all time record in the history of technical seminars, including N.A.B., Las Vegas (when we won 3-2 in extra time with a Karl Kelly Vodka and tonic); Photokina (3-3 Joe Dunton equalising with a dry white wine) and of course SMPTE Australia (2-3 — our only defeat in a year of winning exhibitions).

I think you will all agree that you can be proud of how the SFS London Board have performed away this year.

Love Barry.

INTERNAL MEMO

Date: December, 11th 1984.
From: Mickey Gratton
To: Ann Stirling — Editor SamScene

I am very sorry that due to pressure of work I have not written a piece for your 1st Edition. Group staff will understand I hope, if only because our developments during 1984 have been written up by others in your pages. The move up the road is mentioned under 'Estates' and Jonathan Samuelson outlines the acquisitions which are under the SamCom wing now.

Next edition of SamScene will include a written masterpiece from the folk who operate from Bertie's mirror fronted wonder house in Cricklewood Lane, of that you can be sure. Anyway, Ann, have you actually heard from everybody in the Group? I bet you have not; nevertheless, 'people who live in glass houses' etc, etc.



Tom Samuels,
Group Marketing Director,
Samcine Sales Ltd.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF SAMCINE SALES

1984 has been the year of re-organisation and recruitment for the Sales operation, to solve past problems, consolidate traditional business and to create new opportunities.

Entry into Video Sales has been a major and exciting accomplishment. We were particularly fortunate in the acquisition of Studio 99 Video from the liquidator to start us on our way last December and subsequently to recruit key personnel in the sales, administration and technical services area. We were also fortunate in having terrific input from Samuelson Communications. Building the organisation has continued throughout the year. It is now complete and a force to be reckoned with. A professional sales team is spearheading the move into the video growth areas with the backing of the major suppliers which now include Sony, J.V.C., Ikegami, Hitachi and Panasonic. Major opportunities exist for sales with professional broadcast clients, facilities companies, BBC/IBA contract and stringer cameramen. Also, blue chip companies, government and medical establishments are now ready to apply video technology to their specific needs. In the Samuelson tradition of a complete service to all its customers, the Technical Services Department is now geared to play a vital role in backing up Sales, and most significantly, with the quality of its staff is able to design and install complete video systems, giving Sales another major profitable opportunity, not available to many run of the mill dealers. In the longer term, interactive video, coupled with exclusive computer software, has great potential in expanding the market and strengthening the business.

The traditional part of the business under Samcine Sales has had its own quiet revolution. Product leadership through Steenbeck editing equipment has been a key factor. The Steenbeck 941V table which was introduced last Spring

has pioneered the way in the market for video sound post production and has been well received by BBC Enterprises. Its powerful brother, the ST201 table which similarly incorporates a J.V.C. VCR can be used in conjunction with standard Steenbeck models, giving a film and video option. This, together with a proposed Betacam version, will undoubtedly be the way ahead for our Steenbeck sales in 1985. Other new models are in being such as the 1651 portable, and the ST1B film to tape transfer machine. Some good ideas for new 35mm models are in the pipeline, particularly with the renewed interest in this format.

Harry Baker's fluid heads and tripods have continued to be as popular as ever in 1984, most of the time the F3, F4, F7 and F15's are sold out in advance. His new Rolling Spider has been a resounding success, with tremendous interest from all quarters. The new video head, fully balanced and capable of supporting all major ENG/EFP video cameras is in the advanced design stage.

With the exciting advent of Panavision's 16mm camera "Elaine", Harry supplied an F4 and F7 in special Panavision livery with tripods and, of course, rolling spiders to match.

Samcine Sales Technical Department has now settled in well to the new second floor area at 303 Cricklewood Broadway. Its important role in the technical backing of Sales, enhanced by re-organisation and new recruitment, will provide the opportunity to prove the undoubted professionalism that exists in this area and improve both the volume and quality of our customers services still further.

All credit is due for this department's conscientiousness during a difficult time.

High points for the year for the Sales operation were the 1984 Christmas party and the Samuelson Carnival. Both events were highly enjoyable and gave us fantastic P.R. Exhibitions helped too: from the Academics of York, through I.T.V.A., I.B.C. and Photokina. Sales staff had the opportunity to meet just about every V.I.P. in the business.

Last, but by no means least, we have had two sets of Wedding Bells. Billy Shield from Samcine Sales married Kim in August and John Rossetti from S.V.E. married Jean in October, both amidst great rejoicing, leg-pulling and celebrating.

We wish them, and all staff, a happy and successful 1985.

DID YOU KNOW

... that the combined staff of Samuelson Lighting, Communications and Video Equipment put on a CCTV presentation at the Odeon, Leicester Square for the Royal Premiere of "A Christmas Carol"? The evening attended by Her Majesty The Queen was in aid of the National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare, a charity that helps kids to reach adulthood without trauma and how to cope with life's difficulties.

DID YOU KNOW

... that the Association of Independent Producers (AIP) made a film to lobby Members of Parliament and the general public to promote the British Film Industry? Hopefully the film will encourage the Government to modify the unhelpful terms of the Film Bill. With only 24 hours notice, guess who supplied the production equipment 'on the house'?

ANNA MORPHIC (or the Old Ones are the Best) by Karl Kelly's Ghost

Me and the boys were chatting the other day over a squashed Sunblest sarnie and a mug of Bert's Best, and one of the chaps said "you know, the way to crack this jolly old features lark is bring back SuperTechniscope". "Pray elaborate" I responded, and the ensuing debate convinced me of its merits. So I took up a cold chisel, and casting about me, noticed a brand new 35 BL, hot in from Arriflex. Casting the wrapping aside, I set to and with a swift blow, lopped off the P.L. mount, aiming it directly toward the bin. Taking up a file, I opened the port out extensively, vacuuming out the resultant bits of metal with a Hoover.

Finally, I set a BNCR mount into the hole, sealing it with some Plastic Padding I found on the top shelf in my garage. And, hey presto - Super Techniscope, photographing more of the negative, and placing me in the history books. Away with Anna!

So if anyone comes sidling up to you, muttering about widescreen and dodgy lenses, you just tell him from me - with a cold chisel, a file and some putty, the problem's solved! See Ya! KKG



ROUND THE U BEND

Estates Department staff are a mixed up lot, confesses Bertie Samuelson ("Cow-boy" to his friends), in this exclusive article where he reveals the inner-most secrets of our probably most unnoticed but vital department.

"The Estates Department at present is made up of 20 people of mixed trades. Mixed being the operative word. Everybody knows a little about something but not a lot about everything. The Estates Manager has no trade at all and hasn't a clue about any building technology whatsoever! "(What a fib! See footnote" -Ed)"

In the last 18 months, which was when I joined the department, it has doubled its size and has many achievements of which we are quite proud.

Hi Tech Designs

No doubt our greatest to date is the complete refurbishment of 120 Cricklewood Lane. A project that required the building to be gutted out to a shell and re-constructed to suit Samuelson Communications' needs. Many buildings were demolished to allow a new rear yard to be constructed. All the front exterior brickwork was raked out and re-pointed. All the glass changed for reflecta-float mirrored glass. The exterior was then completely re-painted.

10 Miles of Wiring

Inside, we replaced all the electrics - in fact putting in nearly 10 miles of new wiring and, for the heating installed nearly half a mile of new pipe-work. A new lift was installed, and the roof to the rear warehouse was reconstructed. All was then totally redecorated.

From Spray Shops to Car Parks

Other projects undertaken by the Estates Department are too numerous to list but some examples are: the refurbishment of workshop areas for Samcine Sales, a new spray shop for Spanners Garage, new offices for Worldmark Ltd and new production offices to the rear of X-stage.

Our present work load includes the refurbishment of the Upper Village including the offices upstairs for Zenith Lighting Ltd. We have more work to undertake for Samcine Sales and we are about to embark upon a refurbishment project for Samuelson Film Service London Ltd. We are at present reconstructing the interior of Samuelson Communications W1 Ltd and we hope to have an extensive new car park for the Village finished in time for Christmas which we hope will please local residents as much as Village customers.

Facelift for HQ

Our future work load is, I think, pretty well set out for us already, as among the projects under consideration is the eventual complete refurbishment of Group Headquarters at Samcine House (which may take slightly longer than 120 Cricklewood Lane).

Our Speciality?

I must just add that we in the Estates Department feel that even though we are not directly involved in any of the more glamorous aspects for the Group's activities, we contribute greatly, we hope, to the company's considerable success. We trust we have saved the Group a lot of expenditure over the years and it is our intention to meet the needs of Sammies staff at all times. If nothing else we try to make ourselves known, in the nicest possible way of course, within the Group - we know you are always grateful for us when the drains are blocked!

Anyone for Football?

One final note, the Estates Department is full of many active sports personalities and we would be happy to organise company tennis matches; football; five-a-side etc etc. We are open to offers and will accept all challenges!"

BWS

* Bertie is a qualified Building Technologist.

DID YOU KNOW

... the bar staff of the Magic Hour and Hog's Grunt put their well-earned tips in a box for Guide Dogs for the Blind and into a bottle for the Variety Club?

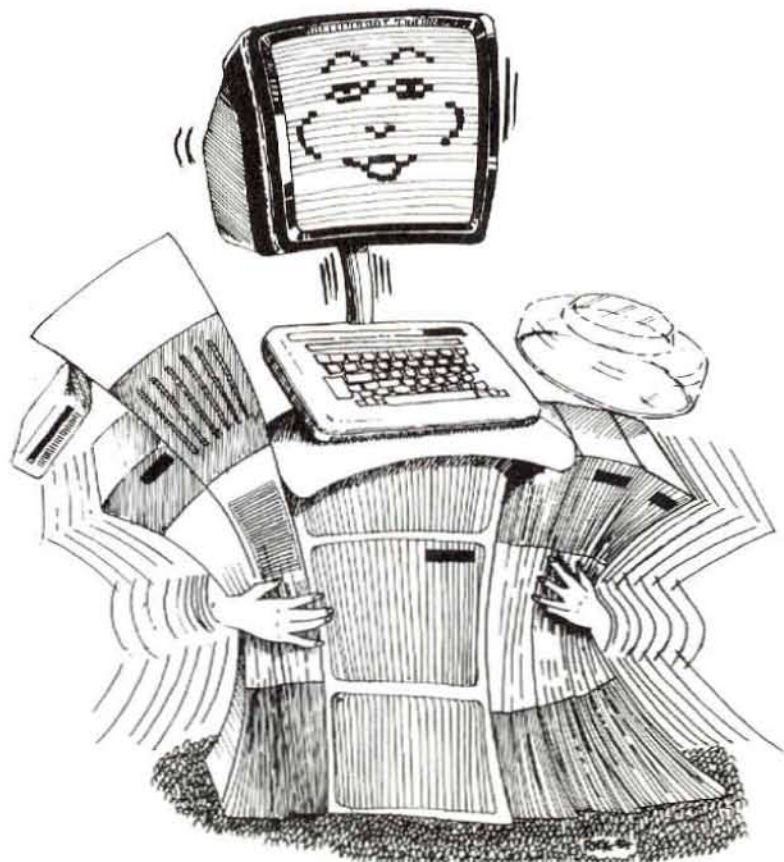
OUR VERY OWN TAME BIG BROTHER

George Orwell definitely got it wrong - that's the opinion of our computer staff who, appropriately enough in 1984, have acquired a new computer.

The Samuelson 'Big Brother', the ICL ME29 is very friendly and will be invaluable in handling the multitude of tasks we put it to; not least running the group payroll.

The installation of the ICL has meant alterations to the computer room on the main floor of Samcine House and re-organisation and redecoration of the offices which explains the refurbishment work many of you have probably seen in progress.

As well as the payroll the computer runs the group accounting system. It is linked to the DRS system that Samuelson Communications use for invoicing and it is used by Samcine Sales for stock control and invoicing. So make sure you are very nice to the computer staff, who are Anne Sunyer (Head of Department); Katrina Catt; Hanna Wright; Barbara Scottow; Rita Ghelani and Paula Reid, or who knows what the gremlins might get up to! (No allusion to Steven Spielberg intended!)



THE WISE OLD OWL SPEAKS

In a recently released film a pack of wolves are seen howling in a moonlit forest; as one fearsome looking wolf turns toward the camera, his eyes appear to light up, eerily piercing the night air. The wolf, however, was no more real than the forest surrounding him, and this haunting effect was achieved using one of Samuelson Lighting's "Inki-Dinkie" lights inside the hollow head of a realistic animated model!

This is just one of the myriad of situations, some weird and wonderful, others rather more conventional, in which our lights have found themselves during 1984.

As well as the highly successful "Company of Wolves" mentioned above, other feature films in which we've been involved over the past year include "The Emerald Forest", "The Chain", "Nairobi", "The Plenty" and "Wild Geese II"; all of these have yet to be released.

Our lights have been used at Pinewood and on location for the new Bond movie "A View to a Kill" and "Santa Claus".

We are proud to have been associated with a recent glittering occasion — the Royal premiere of "A Christmas Carol". Not only did we supply the lights for the picture, but we also had the honour and pleasure of lighting the theatre foyer in which Her Majesty the Queen met our managing director.

Among the TV films to our credit this year are "Love Song", "Young Visitors" (yes, that *is* the way it's spelt!), "Blood Royal", "The Man Who Shot Christmas" and "The Perry Como Christmas Special". In the last of these, we spent a frantic week hurtling around the country, shooting in historic venues and tourist attractions and in various modes of transport from London taxi cabs to the Orient Express! Mr. Como was so impressed with the hard work and professionalism of the British crew that he arranged a free haircut and souvenir jacket for them all (with the exception of Graham Anderson who got the jacket but no haircut!).

Earlier in the year, Samuelson Lighting went on a cruise (strictly in the line of duty, naturally!) for the European sequences of the American TV series "Love Boat". To prove that nothing was too much trouble for us we had a 1000A slimline generator specially built in order that it could be used on board the ship, along with some very smart 120V dryfit non-spillable battery kits, designed with the help of our friends at Samcine Cases.

In the fast-moving world of popular music and the burgeoning "promo" business we've had a lot of fun illuminating such stars as Boy George, Paul Young, Elkie Brooks, Adam Ant, Shakin' Stevens and Eddie Grant among many others.

It's been an exceedingly busy year for TV commercials which, we're glad to say, have made up a significant part of our work load.

On the equipment front, we recently took delivery of a brand new 100kW "sync-locked", silent alternator which

was displayed outside the National Film Theatre at the opening of the London Film Festival, and is now in great demand. Two more are on the way, and by early next year this trio of flagships should make an impressive sight . . . but no sound!

Yet another new addition to our fleet will be a compact, lightweight 30kW alternator, specially designed for smaller jobs and ideally suited for transportation overseas.

Our lamp-refurbishment programme is well underway, and by mid-1985 we hope to have the majority of our vast range of lamps thoroughly cleaned, re-conditioned and re-enamelled in Samuelson Lighting's colours.

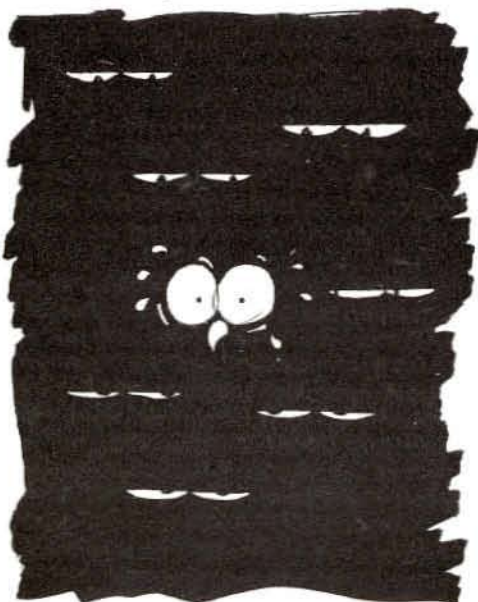
In conjunction with Rank Strand, we co-hosted an evening for the BSC at the Production Village in November. The evening had a distinct Italian flavour with the full range of laniro location lighting on display, the star of the show being the all-new 12kW Sirio HMI spotlight. It was claimed that this light could out-perform the Brute arc, mainstay of the industry for so many years. A "duel" took place between the good ol' brute and its modern rival with the final result diplomatically adjudged an honourable draw . . . cameramen tending to prefer the quality of light from the brute, whilst acknowledging the undoubted convenience and higher light output of the 12kW. However, it has been said that HMI lighting is the future . . . so will this latest development eventually lay the brute to rest? . . . watch this space!

All in all, a busy and varied year, and the indicators point to it being even better in '85 — but more about those in the next issue. So for now, a parting thought . . . it seems rather strange that as film stock becomes more and more sensitive and cameras get increasingly sophisticated, the demand for lights and the quest for individual light output seems greater than ever.

On second thoughts, strange though it might be, it's also rather fortunate, for if that were *not* the case we'd be out of business in no time!

Here's hoping you all have a hoot at Christmas and a bright new year! . . . Owl be seeing you!

Daryl Vaughan



SO THERE IS LIFE NORTH OF WATFORD!

Samuelson Communications Limited Birmingham opened its doors to the unsuspecting public on July 1st 1984, and hasn't looked back since. With over 4,500 sq. ft. of warehouse space and offices, situated on a superb industrial park underneath Spaghetti Junction to the North East of Birmingham city centre, the newest Samuelson brainchild has already established itself as main supplier to the lion's share of the Midlands production houses, and formed excellent working relationships with its fellow suppliers in the area.

Headed up by Steve Harrison, the operation is very positive in its belief that every client, no matter how small, must be given the utmost care and attention — big oaks from little acorns . . .

Paul Dipple runs the hire desk 24 hours a day with the aid of his bleep system which calls him whenever a client in need rings in to the office.

All this efficient back-up service goes to support a very enthusiastic team of technicians, who in their short time with Samuelsons have already handled some very significant shows. Within a month they were touring the UK for Freight-Rover, and some of our other notable clients include: Ansell's, GKN, British Olivetti, Oxford University, Currys, Newey & Eyre, IBM, The Mail on Sunday, Golden Wonder, Ind Coope, National Carriers, Servis, Coca-Cola, Central Television, UB40, W.E.A. Records, Landrover, Acorn Computers, Tyreservices GB, Tesco, Toyota Cars, ICL Computers, BUPA, Austin Rover, Lucas, Dunlop.

Rolls Royce Motors, Jaguar Cars, and Motaquip, to name but a few, put all their conferences into the TLC of Steve Harrison, who translates their fantasies into reality.

Also on the horizon is the current tender for a £138,000 permanent installation at the new Jaguar Cars Museum and Conference Centre in Coventry.

The new Birmingham office adds to the family tree, not only offering a service to the conference and exhibition industries, but also to names like Central Television, who have approached Samuelsons, asking us to stock film cameras and grip equipment etc.

New to the Samuelson Communications service range is speech prompting. We can now as a group offer this service, using our own in-house Q-TV gear from Birmingham or London, for both film or video shoots and conferences.

Joanna Lawley-Wakelin

DID YOU KNOW

. . . that there is a film team going to Ethiopia to produce a film to raise money for the starving in that country? All equipment provided by us.

SCENE AND HEARD

ANYTHING YOU know or hear of that you think may be of interest to the rest of us, tell the Editor and you may get into this, our very own gossip column (eat your heart out Dempster!).

THROUGHOUT SamScene is news of how we help people less fortunate than ourselves — let the Editor know of any more!

FOR THOSE not already in the know you do *not* get a gold watch when you notch up 20 years with Sammies — you *do* get made fun of! In the nicest possible way, of course, by the caricaturist Sallon, of the Daily Mirror, and entering the ranks of the Samcine 20 club. In 1984 two more members of this exclusive society will see their likenesses affixed to the walls of the Group board room — *George Heasman* and *Spike Jackson*.

The first 20 Club member was *Marshall Martin*; others already in the board room are *Reg Sutton*, *Philip Measure*, *Bill Woodhouse* and *Dick Greaves*.

OUR CHAIRMAN wrote the text for an advert praising Panavision's new 16mm camera, Elaine, and subsequently had his wrists severely slapped by outraged letter writers to the ACTT, for being too sexy and sexist. He apologised, typical of his charming, kindly, understanding and lovable disposition — qualities well known to us all. ACTT printed his letter of apology in which he managed to mention the very unsexist recruitment policy Sammies has, just to show our actions support our words!

DURING 1984 Samuelson Group plc shares have been active. From something less than £1.50 at the beginning of the year they have more than trebled — at the time of going to print they stand at £5.60. Obviously, the City likes the way things are going around here.

COLOUR SAMCINEVISION was introduced to the market for the first time on November 22nd. The Paul Weiland Film Co. shoot for Kelloggs Crunch Nut Cornflakes is the first example of the benefits to be gained from this new Samuelson system.

REG SUTTON where are you? Rumour has it Reg has taken up residence in a new office all to himself in a place nobody else knows about! Could this be due to the extensive refurbishment of the Production Offices at the Village we wonder? Reg, who runs our Property Services Division and therefore administers the Production Offices now has 15 of them available for customers to run their productions from, and films which have been produced using our facilities include *Turtle Summer*, *Shady* and *Joshua Then and Now*.

ANOTHER NEW item about to hit the market is the Samsight video processing unit. A magic box if ever there was

one, designed and developed by Insight Video Systems and ourselves, it greatly improves the quality of video assist used together with film cameras (Samcinevision, Panavid etc.).

"THE YOUNG VISITERS" — a delightful film for children, directed by James Hill, goes out on Channel 4 at 5.15 p.m. on Christmas Day. It was made at Bray Studios with our Group also supplying equipment, 16mm cameras, lighting etc, to eminent lighting cameraman, Wolfgang Suschitzky. Do watch.

NEW LOCKERS FOR OLD KNOCKERS

The complaining about the state of the lockers in the Camera Maintenance Department has had to stop now that they have taken delivery of their brand new battleship grey receptacles. Some fears were sounded as to the possibility that there was one short. However, Miss Gillian Martin, SFS London secretary assured your correspondent that this was possibly the one ordered for Bob Smith without whose constant help, support and constructive input we would have had to concentrate on hiring out camera equipment. KK

HOT NEWS FROM CAMERA MAINTENANCE

The new Micro-Wave kindly ordered by Guy Green — Director of Camera Rental, Male Model and sometime Porno Star — made a big hit with all those great guys down in Camera Maintenance. There were a few technical hitches at first. Ralph Hoad's sausage roll looked outstanding until he daintily took his first mouthful "This meat is like old wood" he ejaculated. KK

HAIR HAIR

Rapunzel's grief at losing her mile long locks in the well known fairy tale was nothing compared to Barry Measure's desolation after visiting the barber last week.

"After comparing estimates from several well known coiffeurs" Guy Green reports, "Barry took the plunge. Apparently several men were suffocated in the attempt to reveal Barry's shoulders and it is only with the greatest difficulty I have kept this scandal away from the national press." It is rumoured that Barry's tresses have been bought by an international wig firm for a figure in excess of six figures...

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FIELD BUYS PANAVISION

BOSTON VENTURES Co Ltd Partnership and Ted Field have agreed, in principle, to buy leading film and television camera and lens suppliers Panavision from Warner Communications for 52.5 million.

Peter Samuelson, head of Interscope and executive vicepresident of the Field group of companies, said it would be a matter of weeks before the deal was finalised. Boston Ventures with interests in many areas of the entertainment and other industries, is supervised by executive vps Tom Baldikoski and Samuelson.

Field recently announced that Robert Cort, ex-executive vp with 20th Fox, had been appointed presi-

dent of the entertainment division, Interscope.

Warner's sale of Panavision follows a decision earlier this year to part with computer/video company Atari and other non TV/film interests within the group.

Samuelson confirmed that the new owners were prepared to inject into Panavision, "the capital necessary to ensure it continues its leading position in film and TV technology".

"We have every confidence in the existing team at Panavision, led by chief operating officer, Jack Barber, and hope to have an executive in place in January," he said.



Zenith Lighting Director, Pamela Lord, presents her company's challenge shield to Joanna Williams representing Manor Farm, Richmond, at last year's 'Meet'.

"WHAT'S GOING ON IN RICHMOND PARK?"

Horses and dogs of all shapes and sizes can be found in Richmond Park, south London, on Boxing Day as well as the deer which live there all year round. Why? It's the occasion of the Annual 'Meet' in aid of the Royal Star and Garter Home on Richmond Hill.

What's this got to do with Samuelsons, did I hear you mutter? Well, part of our Group, Zenith Lighting, sponsors the local Riding Club Championship held at the 'meet' and presents a shield and prizes. Other events sponsored by local people and businesses, include classes for working dog, most appealing dog, 'most seasonal' dog, horse or carriage and ponies.

By all accounts the whole day is very enjoyable as all the classes are for fun, as well as being in a worthwhile cause. It must certainly provide an opportunity to work off the day before!

DID YOU KNOW

... that Sammies is supplying cameras to a bunch of film characters who are following in Scott's footsteps to the South Pole? If they are enthusiastic enough to do it, we felt we should be as helpful as we could.

Samcine Sales is loaning a CP16 camera, Samuelson Film Service London an Arri ST and Sam-Aussie an Aaton. Hopefully we'll get everything back, albeit frozen!

VARI-LITE An Introduction by Jimmy Barnett

For the last fifty years, live entertainment lighting has been dominated by a few simple rules. First, the need to light large areas; second, the need to have several different looks and third, the need to be able to change easily between these looks. Until recently this could only be achieved by carrying around large quantities of lamps and dimming equipment, as well as a technical crew to rig and keep it all functioning.

Computer Control

Within the last five years, a dramatic change has taken place with the introduction of computer controlled movable lighting instruments. Of all the available hardware, the Vari-Lite system is fast becoming a standard that the rest of the industry seeks to imitate.

The Vari-Lite is a compact instrument that will pan through nearly 360° and tilt through 270°. In other words the beam of the light will shine almost anywhere from its source position. In addition to this, there are some 90 different colours available at the touch of a button, ranging from light tints to deep blues and reds. Add to this multiple beam sizes and dimming facilities and you have a fairly adaptable unit. Several advantages come to mind, not least that designers are able to create a multitude of different looks from a relatively small number of lamps. This can save transport costs and rigging time. It also gives the designer a new dimension to work with, that of move-

ment. Imagine the effect of 50 or 100 powerful beams of light instantly moving from place to place on the stage.

Lighting for Superstars

Having been involved in the pop music lighting business for twelve years, designing shows with such groups as Abba, The Rolling Stones and Queen, it is easy for me to see how this system developed. The need for both economy and spectacle had always been a problem when designing shows, until two sound engineers at Showco in Dallas, Texas decided they would try to find a solution. The answer lay in producing a workable moving light. After a year or so of research, they came up with a prototype Vari-Lite. Rusty Brutsche, president of Showco, came to London to seek the advice of the group Genesis, with whom he had worked for five years. On being shown the prototype, their reaction was swift: "Build us fifty and we will rent them."

Since then the Vari-Lite system has been used by artists such as The Who, The Police, Culture Club, David Bowie, Diana Ross, Elton John and many others, with great success.

European Partners

It soon became apparent that groups wanted to use the Vari-Lite system wherever they toured and, in order to provide a world-wide service, it was necessary for Showco to find a partner in Europe. As Samuelsons had recently purchased Zenith Lighting Ltd, a company I had used many times to provide lighting equipment, I suggested we talk to Rusty Brutsche with a view to obtaining the European franchise.

Since we opened for business on October 1st 1984, we have received so many enquiries and bookings that we are considering doubling the size of our operation. I feel that the Showco/Samuelson partnership will be most fruitful for both companies and will go a long way towards providing THE live entertainment lighting of the future.

DID YOU KNOW

... that the Young Variety Club of Great Britain has written to us to ask if a Sunshine Coach could be presented by them to a handicapped children's home in the joint names of Sammies and Bermans and Nathans? Young Variety's way of saying "Thank You" to the two companies who have helped them the most with their many fund raising shows over the past 12 years. The coach will be the 75th that Young Variety has given to children's homes since they started in 1972.

