

AMPS

The Association of Motion Picture Sound

Newsletter No. 6

March 1993

AMPS COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

In total 105 voting papers were returned, making this the highest number of voters to participate in an AMPS election so far.

The voting was as follow: Bob Allen 88, Richard Daniel 43, Martin Evans 36, Les Hodgson 62, Sandy MacRae 49, Chris Munro 68, Peter Musgrave 65, Hugh Strain 92.

Accordingly Hugh Strain, Bob Allen, Chris Munro and Les Hodgson were re-elected and Peter Musgrave newly elected to take the position vacated by John Ireland.

Congratulations to those elected and many thanks to the unsuccessful candidates for their participation.

With such an excellent list of members offering themselves for election choosing which way to vote must have been quite difficult. It is hoped that unsuccessful candidates will offer themselves for sub committees, working parties and of course future Council elections.

COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR 1993

At the first Council Meeting of the 1993 Season, the following Council members were elected officers of the Council:

Chairman: Gerry Humphreys

Vice Chair: Robert Allen

Secretary: Lionel Strutt

Treasurer: Eddy Joseph

Membership Secretary: Robin O'Donahue

REPORT BY BOB ALLEN

Editorial

Thank you all members who voted in the Council election. It was good to have so many use their privilege. However, the returns of the questionnaire requesting information to supply to the publishers of the AMPS Directory has been disappointing. To date only 50 have been returned. Perhaps members do not wish to have their names in the new Directory? Surely this can't be so? Inclusion in the Directory is free and it will be supplied to producers and production managers overseas as well as in the UK. So for your own good please make the effort and return the completed form as soon as possible.

1992 was quite an active year for AMPS if not for the Film Industry. Eight top draw movies screened for members in Pinewood's Theatre 7; two social events, one of them free; four technical meetings - two on Time Code, Hard Disk Editing Systems and the Nagra-D; and the launching of, and two issues of, a new and improved Newsletter.

However in the coming year, the Council must refresh itself on the aims and objects of the Association as stated in the constitution.

More activities in the form of working parties to investigate on technical matters and problems, should be instigated.

The original terminology report which contained much valuable information and advice should be updated. The pamphlet of advice to producers, directors and production sound mixers regarding stereo for film and TV should be completed. The previously proposed investigation into 'On Set Noises' should be put into operation, hopefully resulting in their reduction, if not elimination.

Council members give a great deal of time to AMPS affairs; monthly meetings are never less than three hours. Even so it is not always possible to get through all business that should be done.

Sub committees of members led by a Council member should be formed to handle various activities and report back to the Council for approval and action.

After three years it's now time that AMPS became the organisation recognised by producers, directors and others in the Motion Picture Industry as the authority on all matters regarding sound.

BOB ALLEN

This Newsletter is published by the Association of Motion Picture Sound for distribution to all members. AMPS can be contacted through Secretary Lionel Strutt at Mayflower, 3 Rudley Square, London W1. Membership enquiries to Robin O'Donahue, Membership Secretary, Twickenham Film Studios, St Margarets, Twickenham, Middx TW1 2AW.

Any communications with the AMPS Newsletter should be addressed to: The Editor, AMPS Newsletter, Old Post Office Cottage, Old Post Office Rd, Chevington, Suffolk IP29 5RD.

AS MOST WILL BE AWARE, the AGM took place on Sunday 31st January at Pinewood Studios.

After tea, coffee and biscuits and a measure of social chit-chat, the 36 members present (not a very good turn-out) assembled in Theatre 1, the venue having been changed from the advertised Theatre 7 because of a paying booking in that theatre.

After the formal taking of apologies from those members who couldn't attend and were good enough to inform the meeting of their absence, the Chairman announced a re-arrangement of the agenda that had been distributed to members and the addition of an extra item to allow Keith Spencer-Allen to speak about the Newsletter.

Copies of the previous AGM minutes were distributed but because of the very full reporting of that meeting contained in the minutes, the Chairman decided with the meeting's approval to delay taking Matters Arising until later in the meeting when members present would have had time to read them.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

In his address, the Chairman outlined the Association's activities throughout the past year. He thanked Graham Hartstone and Pinewood Studios for the facilities and organisation of the highly successful film shows. He also thanked Pinewood, Twickenham, De Lane Lea and Mayflower Studios for providing venues for Council and General meetings.

He spoke of the social functions held during the year, of the food shortage at the February event and the over abundance at the free Barbecue in mid summer. He thanked all those who had made generous donations to those events and all who had organised the functions.

In mentioning the Newsletter, he urged members to take advantage of it and participate by sending in material for publication.

He announced that if re-elected to the Council he would continue to work for the Association but he would be stepping down from the Chair to allow someone else to contribute in that capacity.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reminded those present that in previous years because the Association financial year ends on 31st December and the AGM has to be

held before the end of the following January, it is not possible to have the accounts fully audited. What he presented was a financial statement of 1992 Income and Expenditure. Accounts will shortly be submitted to an independent qualified accountant for auditing.

The Treasurer pointed out that income was down due to quite a number of members not renewing their subscriptions.

Expenses for the year had increased on the previous year due to greater activity rather than rising costs. The main increases were for postage and photocopying, increases that the members would be aware of due to the frequency of mailshots received and the two editions of the Newsletter.

He announced that the Council had decided to increase the subscription for 1993 to £35.00 but would keep it at £30.00 for those who took advantage of the standing order arrangement that was to be introduced this year with the renewal notices.

NEWSLETTER AND SOUNDTRACK

Keith Spencer-Allen, who looks after the publication of the AMPS Newsletter, requested members to participate more fully in the content of the Newsletter by supplying news of interesting projects, problems they had encountered or comments that they wished to make about any aspect of the business. They needn't worry about making perfect literary epistles as even rough notes could be worked into articles by the editors.

He also gave information about 'Soundtrack', a new publication on sound for Movies and TV that he will shortly be publishing. In future the AMPS Newsletter will be issued in conjunction with Soundtrack which will be distributed free to all members as well as having worldwide distribution.

GENERAL FORUM

Bob Allen endeavoured to explain to the meeting the meaning of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Considerable discussion followed. The members present were not sure whether the system of awarding units of competence to persons in motion picture sound would be a good idea or if it would even be practical to do so.

One member asked if it should be put to the meeting whether we wanted NVQs in the film industry? However, he and the meeting were assured that NVQs were coming whether members

3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of AMPS wanted them or not.

It was decided that Bob Allen should carry on with the work he has already done concerning NVQs on behalf of AMPS. A call for volunteers to form a working party to help was well responded to. It was also decided to call a further general meeting on the subject.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman now called for matters arising from the 1992 AGM Minutes. This produced, as last year, a very lively debate on the sad state of the British Film Industry and what can be done about it.

The slow progress of the Film Commission was questioned. It was suggested that more concentration of effort to attract foreign producers to the UK for post production sound work should be made. While agreed this would be a good idea, several members pointed out that the Film Commissioner had already helped attract overseas producers and it was really too early to be over critical.

COUNCIL ELECTION

During the meeting, Brian Hicken, acting as returning officer assisted by Brian Simmons and Alan Paley opened and counted the postal votes cast by voting members for the election of the necessary five members of the council.

The full results tabled in a special report in this Newsletter were announced to the meeting. John Ireland made a short retirement speech and was loudly applauded for all the great work he has put into the Association during its year in formation and the three years of its existence.

Peter Musgrave was congratulated on his election and welcomed as a newcomer to the Council.

REPORT BY BOB ALLEN

AMPS GENERAL MEETING

REPORT: NAGRA-D

The first General Meeting of the year took place on Sunday 17th January at Twickenham Studios. The subject of the meeting was to be a presentation by John Rudling and Claude Burton of the newly formed Nagra UK on the Nagra-D Digital Recorder.

John Rudling kicked off with an explanation of the reasons behind the formation of a dedicated UK Nagra company and how the Nagra-D was viewed as a future direction by Kudelski. He also touched on how other digital developments (such as producing data recorders with Honeywell for the US military) had given Nagra valuable digital experience and why they had opted for tape reels rather than a cassette format.

The large number of members this meeting attracted - over 60 - led to brochures on the machine running out even before the demonstration was under way.

Claude Burton started by showing that the two machines were working models by playing music through the theatre system and then running through the hardware and software features of the product. John Rudling had the day before returned from a visit to the factory and was able to add the very latest position on software changes to be implemented in the future,

While similarities between the D and the established analogue range were drawn it was clear that the D's software control goes far beyond basic facilities. For example, it was explained that it is possible to recover faded audio should the need arise by connection to an external PC prior to the D being turned off.

It was clear that many present were burning to ask questions specific to them and the session quickly broke up into informal discussion groups. Bob Allen, who had introduced the meeting, then stepped in to return it to a more formal question and answer session that would be of more benefit to the recording of the meeting.

Practical questions concerned the requirement to record digital tracks in pairs which was explained by the Nagra adoption of the AES/EBU digital interface standard that states use of stereo tracks; the ability of the unit to withstand location conditions; the use of rotary heads for the digital tracks and fixed head for the linear tracks such as time code; the obvious battery life questions and the ability to edit with scissors (Yes, you can, but only in quiet sections).

Then came the financial questions. The devaluation of Sterling has not helped pricing which is clearly going to mean some serious thinking if the Nagra-D is just viewed as a digital replacement for its analogue predecessor.

The meeting then moved to the studio bar which Nagra had generously hosted and more informal discussion.

This was a valuable meeting which led to members gaining a clearer and practical explanation of Nagra's direction and thinking with the D as well as Nagra receiving some very practical advice from experienced users about what they wanted - a very beneficial experience all round.

KEITH SPENCER-ALLEN

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Film & Television Oral History

In 1987 under the leadership of Roy Fowler and the auspices of the ACTT, a group of people got together to inaugurate an oral history project which would provide for the future an archive of information about the British Film and Television Industries and the people who worked in them.

Since then, a volunteer group have conducted and recorded 256 in-depth interviews with people, from all departments of both industries, talking about their work and experiences.

Sadly, of the 256, only 13 represent sound - John Aldred, Keith Barber, Peter Birch, Ken Cameron, Cyril Crowhurst, Peter Handford, Geoff Labram, Gordon McCullum, Harry Miller, Wyn Ryder, Adolph Simon, Reg Sutton and Fred Tomlin. Fortunately they are a good cross section but many more sound people need to be recorded.

As only two of the thirty active members of the project are from sound, it's understandable why so little has been done so far. Extra sound volunteers are urgently needed to redress the situation. If any AMPS members think they would be prepared to help with interviews and other activities of the project, I would like to hear from them and give them further information.

BOB ALLEN (CONTACT ON 0284 850332).

(See over for excerpt from Gordon McCullin's Interview)

An Apology

It has been pointed out that in AMPS Newsletter No 5, the job description 'Dubbing Editor' was used instead of the intended 'Sound Editor'. The Newsletter editors apologise and will ensure that in future only the term 'Sound Editor' will be used.

Screenings Request

We have had a request from the organisers of the AMPS screenings to ask that, if you are unable to attend a screening after requesting tickets, it would be helpful if you could call the office at Pinewood and let them know (anytime between 8am and 6pm). Some of the films have proven so popular that all the available tickets were taken and many requests had to be refused. However there were empty seats at the screening as several never took up their bookings. So it would be helpful if you could let them know you can't go - so someone else can.

EXHIBITIONS & CONFERENCES 1993

International Photo, Cinema, Optical, Audiovisual & Photofinishing Show (SICOF)
Milan, Italy March 11-15
94th Audio Engineering Society Convention
Berlin, Germany March 16-19
NAB Convention
Las Vegas, USA April 19-22
SAITS & Audio/Video Pro
Paris, France May 25-28

International Television Symposium (ITS)
Montreux, Switzerland

June 10-15

APRS '93
Olympia 2, London June 23-25
4th AES Australian Regional Convention
Melbourne, Australia

August 12-15

95th Audio Engineering Society Convention
New York, USA October 12-15
SMPTE Convention
Los Angeles, USA October 30-November 2

AN INTERVIEW WITH GORDON McCALLUM

The following is a section transcribed from the interview with Gordon McCallum recorded shortly before he died. Permission to print this has been given by the ACTT / BECTU History Project but the copyright remains theirs.

Gordon McCallum

"I feel that the main requirement is an ability to understand the dramatic content of the picture that you're working on and to play your tracks accordingly. In many ways, it's very much like an actor working. There is expression in the way you play your tracks, or there should be, You don't just open a pot to a given level; you're playing all the time. I particularly found that I played music, not as music but as a dramatic element in the film but I felt that in the feel of the way you handled it, it contributed more or less to a scene. I felt that I grew to know how it should be played for a picture and I think that feel is the main requirement above all. I suppose I went through various phases of having great dexterity; you had to fiddle so many switches and so on. Some people would be clumsy and not able to do that but as long as you've got that requirement and as long as you understand film.. you had to be a bit of a politician. That was a very important element. I was determined to do the very best job I possibly could with everything that I had to do but, on the other hand, I had to please other people, obviously notably the director and the producer (to begin with that was not possible always because they used to argue) and the musician, who wanted to hear every note of music. Basically, in many cases, they only wanted to hear the music; they didn't want to hear anything else.

The audience however, I'm quite convinced, wanted to hear every word of dialogue and that really is their concern with a film.

Particularly in recent years, as films became more and more ambitious, you have more and more people in the cutting room, all doing very valuable and essential work, but all in little watertight compartments, and some of the big pictures resulted in enormous

numbers of tracks coming in - enormous. I lost count in the end of just how many tracks we would get in to mix together for a reel and even with stereo sound you cannot listen to too many things at one time, or, if you can hear them all, you can't sort out what is important, you can't get the feel created by certain things that would be important to the film. So as a dubbing mixer, you have to decide for yourself.

Many people would like to step up to the desk and do it. They know what they would like to do but they wouldn't know how to do it. You know how to do it and all the people who are telling you what they want are all telling you something different. So, basically, the dubbing mixer has to decide - he's a balancer, not merely of sound but of all the other conflicting interests. It was very difficult. At times I would disappoint some people who'd sweated their guts out, if I may use the expression, on laying some footsteps or on another brilliant job which on its own would have contributed a tremendous amount but in conflict with all the other interests did not contribute anything but rather detracted instead.

So it was necessary for me to take decisions like that which were not always agreeable to everybody but on

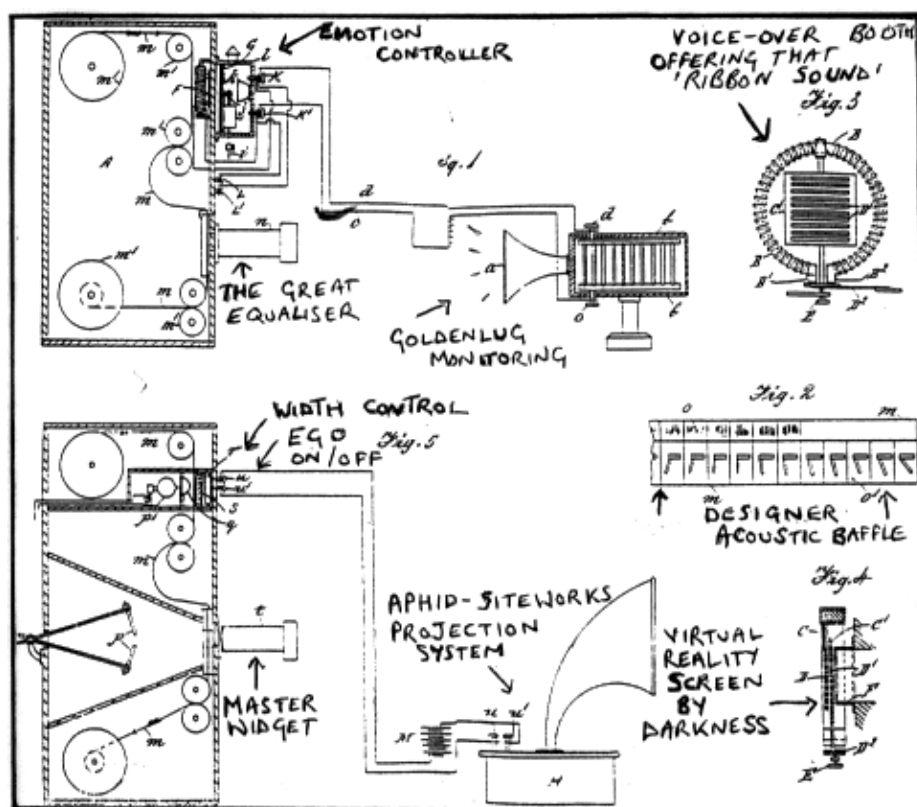
balance turned out to be right. You had to have a certain amount of conviction and a certain amount of confidence but you also had to listen to everybody else's point of view and try to meet it if you could. But there comes a point where it was impossible to meet all the points -certainly with the question of music.

I got on extremely well with some composers and they recognised that the music had to played dramatically. Others, who purely wanted to hear it as a piece of music may not have been quite as satisfied. That could well be the case.

Inevitably, I think my number one aim was to make sure dialogue was fully audible. After that, I like to play the music and effects for the best possible balance, the best possible compromises, whatever was working best when they had their day. I think that's basically it. You had to be able to make up your own mind and have a go. You also had to be responsive to other people's points of view and to try and balance it. You had to be a bit of a politician and very patient - and I don't know that I am. I'm a mixture of great patience and great impatience, if you know what I mean. There comes a point where patience can't go on but I was generally very patient to try and get the best result."



NEWSLETTER NO 5 COMPETITION RESULT



The answer was that the diagrams shown were taken from the original drawings submitted by Eugene Lauste and his backers in August 1906 with his patent application (No 18057) for 'A New Or Improved Method Of And Means For Simultaneously Recording And Reproducing Movements And Sounds'. In other words, his synchronous sound on film system.

It was a tough question. Only one answer was received and that was in the 'most original answer' section, submitted by associate member Nicholas Lowe. Nicholas annotated the drawings as shown and supplied the following explanation.

• "The drawings relate to a number of important developments in motion picture sound recording many of which are stiff to be found in our theatres today. Indeed it is clear from your picture that the ensemble represents a floor plan of a typical West End dubbing theatre."

Well done and many thanks for your effort. Let me know what size and colour sweatshirt you would like.

BOB ALLEN

Summer Barbecue

Make a note of Sunday June 6th at Pinewood Studios for the Summer Barbecue organised by the Cine Guilds of Great Britain in conjunction with AMPS. Details on time, entertainment and ticket price to follow. Plan to bring the whole family.

Recordings of Meetings

Cassette tapes of the General Meetings that have been recorded are available on request to paid-up Members who were unable to attend the meetings. Tapes available so far include:

- Stereo Sound for Cinema & TV: General Forum
- Dolby Systems: John Iles / Tim Partridge
- Time Code Practices: Panel of Speakers
- Keycode: Tony Harcourt, FBKSTS, Kodak
- Introduction to Tapeless Recording & Hard Disk Editing: Y. Hashmi, Sypha
- Nagra-D Presentation: John Rudling & Claude Burton, Nagra UK.

'Reproduction' in Cinemas

According to a news item in The Guardian (16/1/93), Ben Freedman, managing director of The Prince Charles cinema, is re-introducing Love Seats into this West End cinema.

He claims that 50% of people who go to the cinema are out on a date. He says he's going to make it easier for them by providing seats covered in Blue Velvet with all the obstructions removed. The seats will also be provided with condoms, for, he says, you never know what people will get up to in the West End.

The seats went into service on Valentine's Day when customers for the seats were presented with chocolates, roses and champagne.

So who cares about the sound as long as it is not at a level that will interfere with the murmurings of the foreplay but at the appropriate moment will reach a loud crescendo to drown the heavy breathing and orgasmic screams.

BOB ALLEN

Introduction to BKSTS Course - Sound and Sound Recording

Tuesday 23rd February saw the start of a very comprehensive sound instruction course organised by the BKSTS. Designed as a primer course for sound in Film and Television, the six weekly lectures are designed to give a good basic knowledge needed for understanding and efficient operation of professional sound recording equipment.

The lectures are as follows:

- 1 23 FEB Sound Fundamentals
- 2 3 MAR Microphones & Loudspeakers
- 3 9 MAR Magnetic Recording
- 4 16 MAR Mixing & Editing
- 5 23 MAR Audio In Practice 1 - A Symposium on sound for Film & Cinema
- 6 30 MAR Audio In Practice 2- A Symposium on sound for Television & Radio

The meetings will be held at Glenthams Studios, Glenthams Road, Barnes, London - starting at 7 am through to 9 pm.

Individual lectures may be attended for £25.00 plus VAT. Fees for the full course were £120.00 plus VAT for BKSTS and AMPS members.

For full details of the lectures, contact the BKSTS Training Dept on (071) 242 8400 or Fax (071) 405 3560.

Sweatshirts

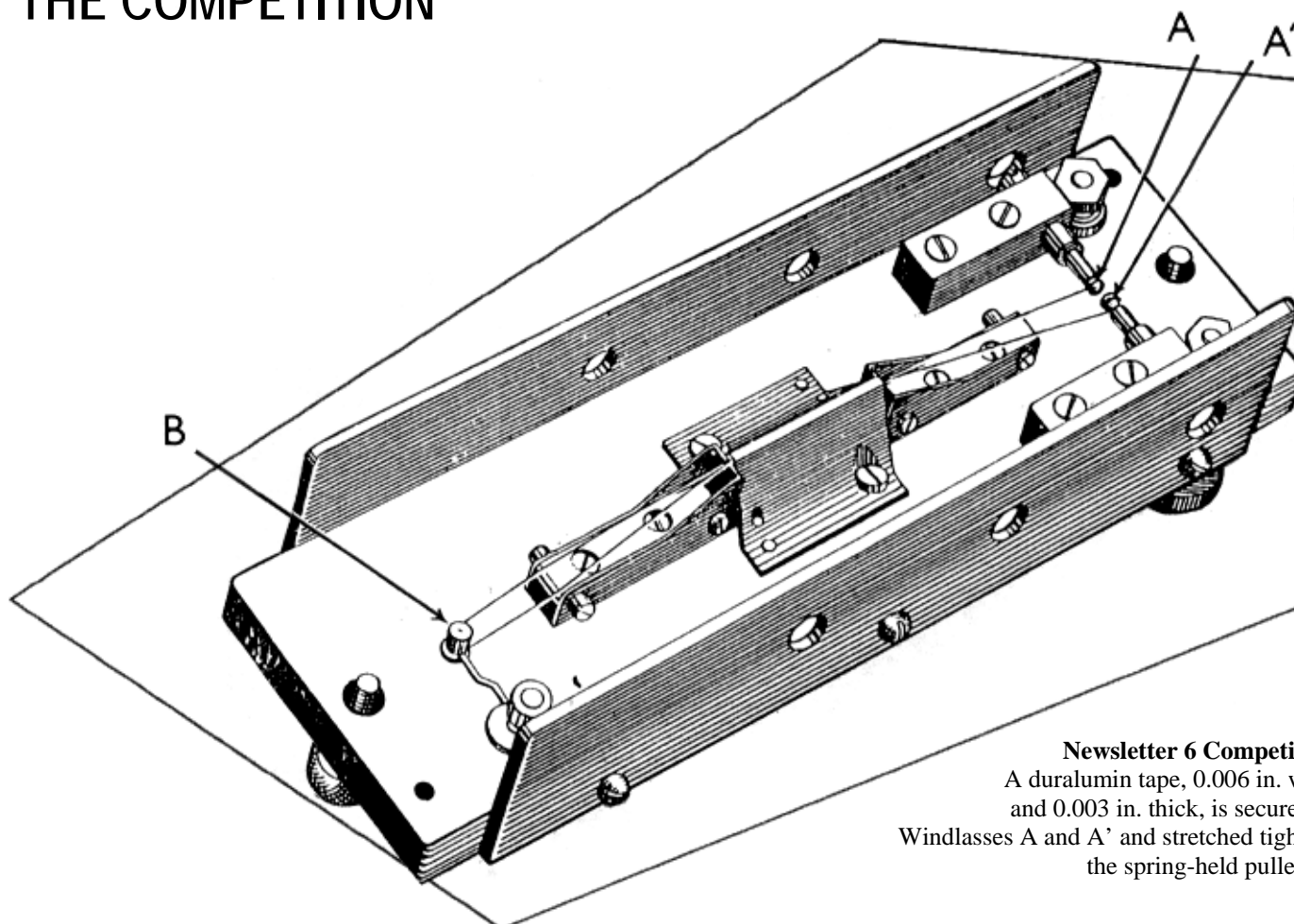
You've joined the Association, read the Newsletter, now wear the Sweatshirt!

High quality AMPS sweatshirts are back again, available in Red, Black, Dark Blue, Light Blue or White and all feature a discreet AMPS logo on the front.

Sizes are Large and Extra Large, and at just £15.80 each they represent excellent value.

CALL (0284) 850332 TO ORDER YOURS!

THE COMPETITION



Newsletter 6 Competition

A duralumin tape, 0.006 in. wide and 0.003 in. thick, is secured to Windlasses A and A' and stretched tight by the spring-held pulley B.

Hopefully at least more senior if not all members will find this easier than the last poser.

What is it a drawing of?

Sweatshirt prize for first correct answer.

Send entries to AMPS Competition, 1 Braes St, London N1 2AB - to arrive by 30th March 1993.

FOR SALE

- NAGRA 4.2 in excellent condition, one owner. Feature use only. David Lane maintained and modified from new. Three mic inputs plus ident mic. Rechargeable cells. ATN and PAR. Cactus leather case. £1850. (0753) 644869.

- NEUMANN RSM190 stereo mic / EA3OBMT suspension / Rycote gag & Hairy / 20m cable - £1500; Sennheiser K3U power module / ME40 (cardioid) / ME20 (omni) capsules - £130; Sennheiser MZA16P48 48V phantom battery power

supply - £80; 2 x AKG C451E / CKI capsules / B46E battery packs - each £150; NAGRA IS-TLC Mono Pilotone Recorder / IESL Synchroniser / ATI charger / IACC battery / leather case - £2990; Keith Monks FP363 3-section fish pole - £20; Sony TC-D5M portable stereo cassette recorder & case - £270; Sony LC-D5 case for TC-D5M (brand new) - £25; Panasonic KX-T2416DBE telephone / answer machine - £100; also Quad 33 control unit - offers? Beyer DT 480 (yes 480) headphones (closed ear type) - offers? Excluding VAT. All in excellent condition, most items in original packing. Phone or fax (same number): Pat Heigham

(0372) 457492.

- FOUR AKG D900E rifle mics - £50 each; Crown Pressure Zone mic CM100 - £10; Selection of Synchronisers and Squawk Boxes - offers; 1 inch audio tapes 2400 ft x 40 - £10 each; old 35mm stock (for spacing) - offers; Brother HR20 Daisywheel Printer (compatible with most WPs) - Centronics / Parallel - £100. Contact Lionel Strutt on (071) 493 0016.

**This space is available FREE to AMPS members who have equipment that they wish to sell or buy.
SEND DETAILS TO THE EDITOR.**

NEWS

- The end of 1992 saw the start of the full merger of the AMS and Neve companies to form a single operation. Both were members of the Siemens Group for several years before the decision to combine was announced in the spring of last year. So far there have been no announcements regarding changes in the existing product ranges other than that a degree of rationalisation can be expected. AMS Neve plc is contactable at Billington Road, Burnley, Lancs BB11 5ES. Tel: 0282 457011. Fax: 0282 39542.

- Following 14 Dolby SR-D productions in the USA, the first European film with a Dolby Stereo Digital soundtrack, Joseph Vilsmaier's 'Stalingrad' has just been released in Germany, Austria

and Switzerland. At present ten German cinemas are SR-D equipped and one each in Austria and Switzerland. The soundtrack was mixed at Bavaria Film.

From mid-March Dolby will have a digital mastering system in Europe and a digital sound camera in the UK. SR-D film printing facilities have already been installed at Arri, Munich and LTC, Paris.

London SR-D equipped cinemas are the Empire and Odeon in Leicester Square with two more for London and Manchester due shortly. Paris will soon have a fourth SR-D cinema and there are other installations in Toulon, Brussels, Stockholm, Copenhagen - and shortly Iceland - leading to a worldwide total of over 100. SR-D films on current release include Dracula, Bodyguard, Under Siege and Honey, I Blew Up The Kid.