

The Newsletter  
of the Association of  
Motion Picture Sound

ISSUE 40  
WINTER 2001

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AGM ANNOUNCEMENT

**XMAS  
SPECIAL**



HEARING DOGS  
for DEAF PEOPLE



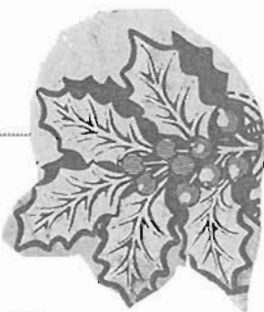
DON'T FORGET US!  
from an original painting  
by Chrissie Snelling

This Newsletter is edited by Bob Allen and Keith Spencer-Allen and is published by the Association of Motion Picture Sound for distribution to all members. AMPS can be contacted through Brian Hickin, The Admin Secretary, 28 Knox Street, London W1H 1FS. Membership enquiries to Patrick Heigham, AMPS Membership Secretary, c/o 28 Knox Street, London W1H 1FS. Any communications with the AMPS Newsletter should be addressed to The Editor, AMPS Newsletter, Old Post Office Cottage, Old Post Office Road, Chevington, Suffolk IP29 5RD, or Fax 01732 779168, or Email: [editor@amps.net](mailto:editor@amps.net)

# Merry Christmas



*AMPS COUNCIL  
HOPE THAT ALL  
MEMBERS  
HAVE  
A VERY  
HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS*



## AMPS SUSTAINING MEMBERS

### AKAI PROFESSIONAL

[www.akaipro.com](http://www.akaipro.com)

### AMS NEVE

[www.ams-neve.com](http://www.ams-neve.com)

### ANVIL POST PRODUCTION

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[www.audio.co.uk](http://www.audio.co.uk)

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### DB POST

[www.dbpost.com](http://www.dbpost.com)

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### DSP Ltd

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[www.dtsonline.com](http://www.dtsonline.com)

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[www.feltech.co.uk](http://www.feltech.co.uk)

### FUTURE POST

[www.futurefilmgroup.com](http://www.futurefilmgroup.com)

### GEARBOX

[www.gearbox.com](http://www.gearbox.com)

### NAGRA

[www.nagra.com](http://www.nagra.com)

### PINEWOOD STUDIOS

[www.pinewood-studios.co.uk](http://www.pinewood-studios.co.uk)

### RG MEDIA

[www.rgml.co.uk](http://www.rgml.co.uk)

### RICHMOND FILM SERVICES

### RPS DATA PRODUCTS (UK)

[www.rpsdataproductions.co.uk](http://www.rpsdataproductions.co.uk)

### RYCOTE

[www.rycote.com](http://www.rycote.com)

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[www.sennheiser.co.uk](http://www.sennheiser.co.uk)

### SHEPPERTON STUDIOS

[www.sheppertonstudios.co.uk](http://www.sheppertonstudios.co.uk)

### SOLID STATE LOGIC

[www.solid-state-logic.com](http://www.solid-state-logic.com)

### SONY BROADCAST & PROFESSIONAL UK

[www.pro.sony-europe.com](http://www.pro.sony-europe.com)

### SONY CINEMA PRODUCTS

[www.sdds.com](http://www.sdds.com)

### TECHNICOLOR

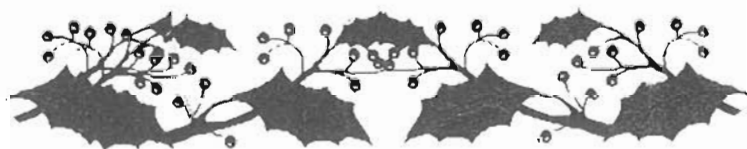
[www.technicolor.com](http://www.technicolor.com)

### TELEFILM VIDEO SERVICES

[www.telefilm.co.uk](http://www.telefilm.co.uk)

### TWICKENHAM FILM STUDIOS

[www.twickenhamfilmstudios.com](http://www.twickenhamfilmstudios.com)

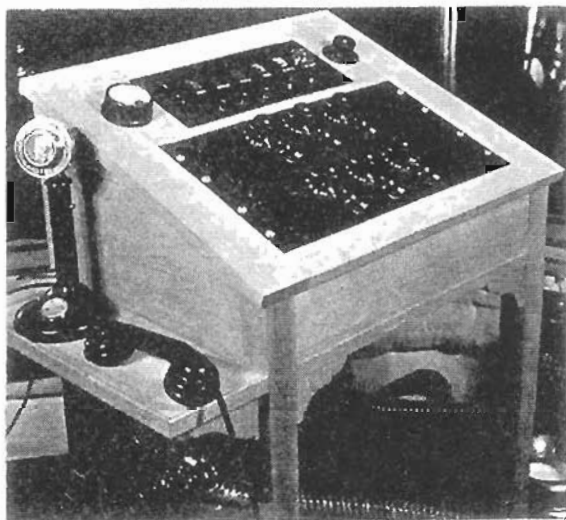




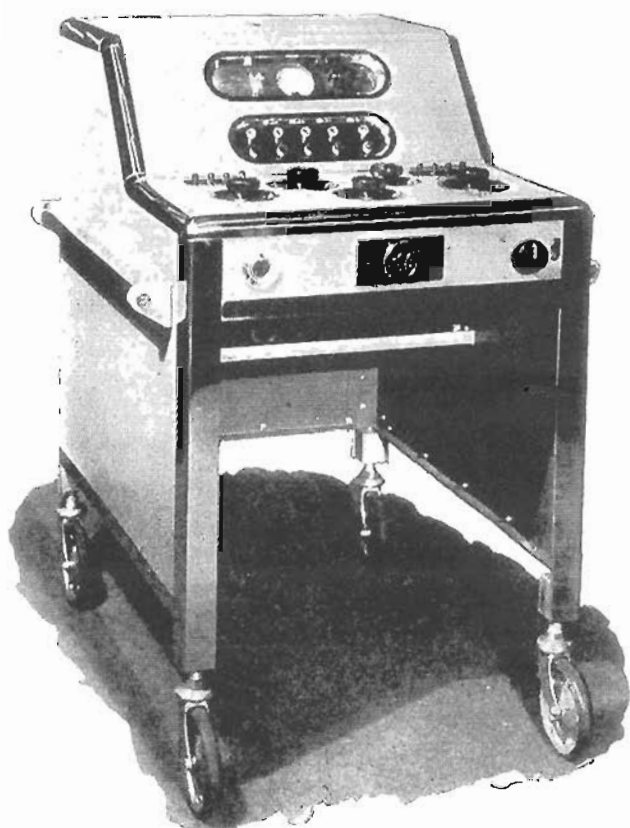
# A PARADE OF PAST PRODUCTION MIXERS

I thought that after the great display of trolleys laden with all the latest in electronic wizardry for recording production sound, present day exponents of the craft, born in the latter part of the 20th Century, may like to see this pictorial collection of equipment used by their predecessors for getting intelligible dialogue all on one track.

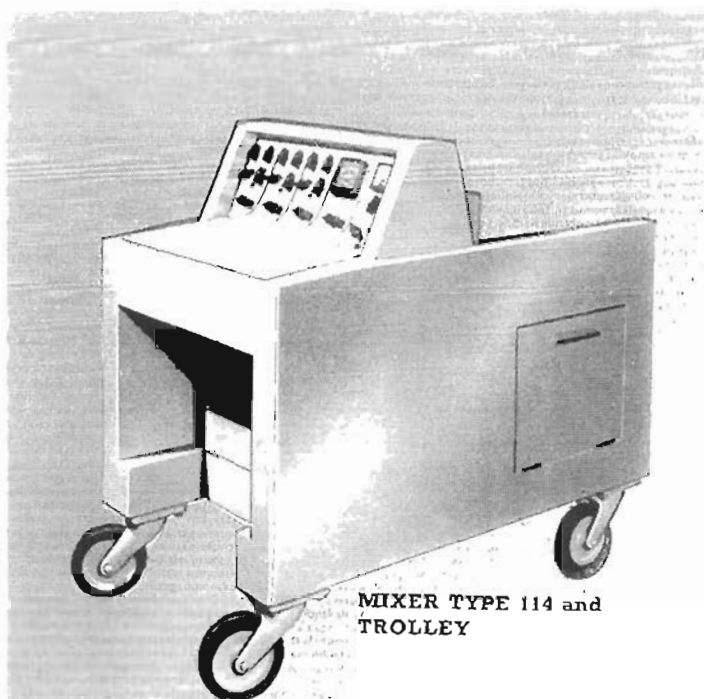
BOB ALLEN



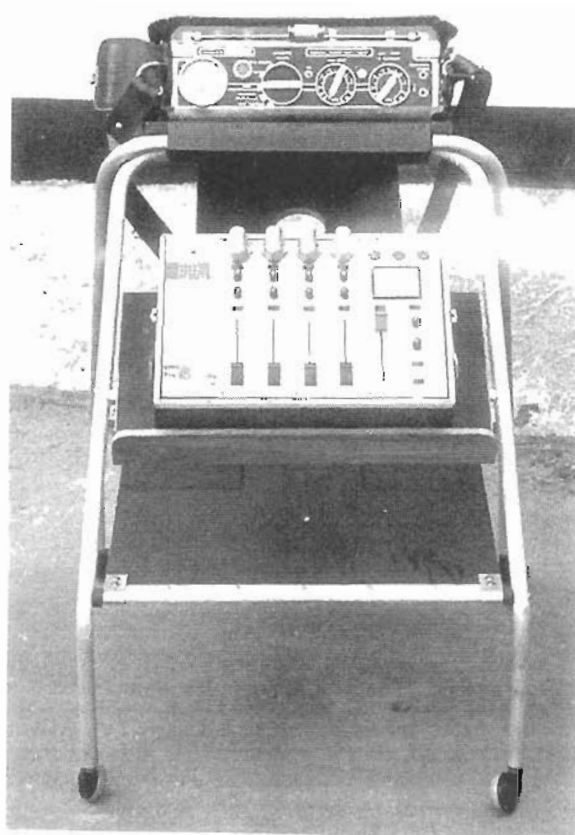
1930s



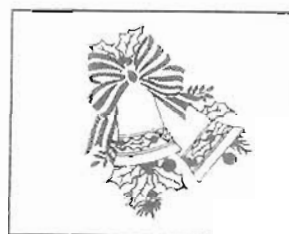
1940s



1950s



1960s



## ISA'S CONTRIBUTION TO HEARING DOGS FOR DEAF PEOPLE



Isa, a chocolate coloured mongrel stray was picked up off the street and adopted by Hearing Dogs For Deaf People.

There was no indication at the time that she was pregnant. It was not until she was placed with one of their dog 'socialisers' that it became apparent Isa was shortly to present the charity with new recruits for their kennels.

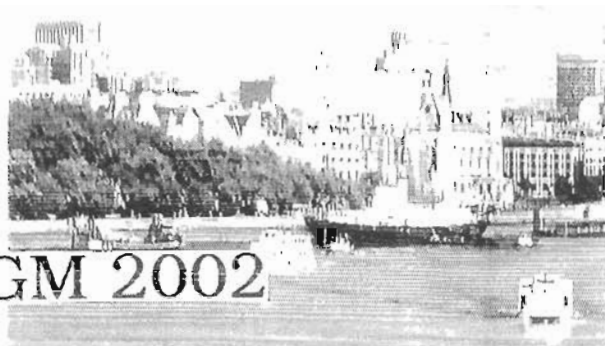
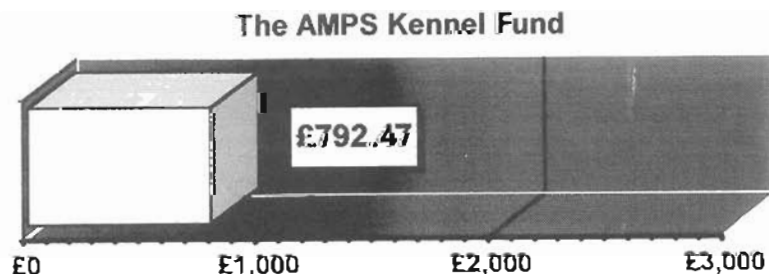
Isa gave birth to seven healthy puppies - three male and four female. Jenny Moir from the charity said "Isa is proving to be a very good mum and the puppies will stay with her until they are six weeks old when they will be assessed as to their suitability for training as hearing dogs.

*Picture and item sent in by David Bowen*

*How the fund raising is progressing  
- at the end of November 2001*



□ Progress Chart



## AGM 2002

**Why not a long weekend in London?  
Bring the Family!**

The next Association Annual general meeting will be on Sunday 10th of February, again at Pinewood Studios.

As membership outside of the M25 continues to grow, the Council, always aware that those members are disadvantaged regarding screenings and general meetings, realise that in the near future decentralisation of events will be imperative.

However, that's in the future so why not consider turning the next AGM into a long weekend in London and not only catch up with AMPS affairs but all the new capital's new tourist attractions as well.

The AGM and Sustaining Members Show on Sunday morning is really worth the journey on its own - ask any of the members who attended this year's event. It's a great chance to meet up with colleagues in all the crafts of moving picture sound and a unique chance to meet and talk with many of the manufacturers and distributors of the equipment you use.

It's also a chance to voice your opinions and say how you want the Association to progress. The coming AGM will start with an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to discuss constitutional revisions, so if you're there you will be able to debate the issues.

The following are a few of the new tourist attractions. Remember that it might be a bit cold out of doors in February but this is to your advantage as tourist numbers are down, making your participation in attractions much less hectic. Most of those listed are indoors so weather is not necessarily a deterrent. However you can almost be certain that the Sunday of the AGM will be fine and sunny - it's been like that for at least the past three years.

Hotel accommodation in London is not cheap. Probably the best value is to be found with Travel Lodge. There are Travel Lodge motels in Ilford, Park Royal, Wimbledon, Battersea, Docklands, Heston and the City. Nightly rooms rates vary from £69.95 to £79.75. Winter weekend rates may be lower. To check and book 08700 850 950. Privately run bed and breakfast places will be cheaper of course.

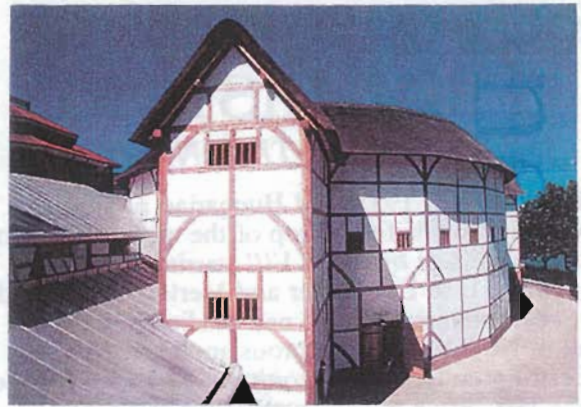
*Go on take a break: you'll enjoy it.*







The London Frog Tour - A unique way to see London. Genuine World War II amphibious vehicles which take 30 passengers on an 80 minute tour of London's famous sights by road and then splash into the Thames for a trip on the river to see the sights from a completely different perspective. Information phone 020 7928 3132



The Globe Theatre - On Thames Bankside, a couple of hundred metres away from where the original Shakespearean Globe Theatre stood, the reconstructed theatre is the first building in London to be given a thatched roof since the Great Fire of 1666. Regular Shakespearean and other performances. Information about what's on 020 7401 9919



Fly The London Eye - The big big wheel. From inside its slowly revolving pods you have a vantage point which allows breathtaking views over the whole of London at once. Run by British Airways, the Eye knows only airline language. You have to 'check-in' half an hour before boarding and the 'flight' takes 30 minutes. For information phone 0870 5000 6000 or book online at

[www.ba-londoneye.co.uk](http://www.ba-londoneye.co.uk)



There's Always the Buses - The Big Bus Co, winner of the London Tourist Board's 'Sightseeing Bus of the Year' Award, operates a number of routes taking in London's major sights and landmarks. Look out for their bus stops, jump on, buy a ticket and you can get off where you wish, then later, pick up another passing Big Bus Co bus to continue your tour, or you can change route if you wish. Information 020 7233 9533



County Hall - Once the home of the Greater London Council it now houses The London Aquarium is next door where you will find all sorts of exotic and stunning denizens of the deep including sharks and giant rays. London Aquarium 020 7967 8007



Not Forgetting IMAX - Bigger than Bradford, it's the UK's largest cinema screen, the height of five double decker buses and completely fills your field of vision. All the latest 2D and 3D productions are on show on a repertory basis. For programme details and booking 020 7902 1234



# A SLICE OF (FILM) HISTORY

## - The Film That Never Was

The year was 1933, and Hungarian producer Alexander Korda felt on top of the world. His film, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* starring Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester and Merle Oberon, had just been premiered at the new Radio City Music Hall in New York to rapturous applause. Made on a shoestring budget at Isleworth Studios it went on to break box office records week after week, and grossed over half a million pounds during its first run! It was the first British film to conquer the American market, and Charles Laughton was awarded an Oscar. The film also established Merle Oberon as a star.

Alex returned to England to build on his success, with everyone wanting to lend him money. He had to find another role for Laughton, and considered *King Lear* but found the subject far too depressing. He rejected *Don Quixote* because he could not imagine Laughton in the leading role.

*Toulouse Lautrec* was suggested, but Laughton could not be expected to go through the production acting on his knees. He spent some months writing a script for *Cyrano De Bergerac*, but Laughton adamantly refused to wear a false nose and the subject was dropped. Alex had always wanted to make a film about the great Dutch painter Rembrandt, who actually bore a close resemblance to Laughton, and so Rembrandt it was.

Laughton became quite enthusiastic and sat for hours studying portraits of the great man. He even grew a moustache and trained it until it was exactly like Rembrandt's. Laughton also learnt to draw and paint, so that handling brushes in front of a canvas was second nature. His own wife, Elsa Lanchester, was to play Rembrandt's wife. Alex's brother Vincent designed some great sets, the best in his career. But the film, made at Alex's new Denham Studios, built with a loan from the Prudential, was a resounding commercial failure. Although well made, the theme of the film was depressing and more like a museum piece, too heavy for filmgoers.

Even Alex's offer of free admission to anyone who owned a Rembrandt failed to stir up any public interest!

## I, CLAUDIUS

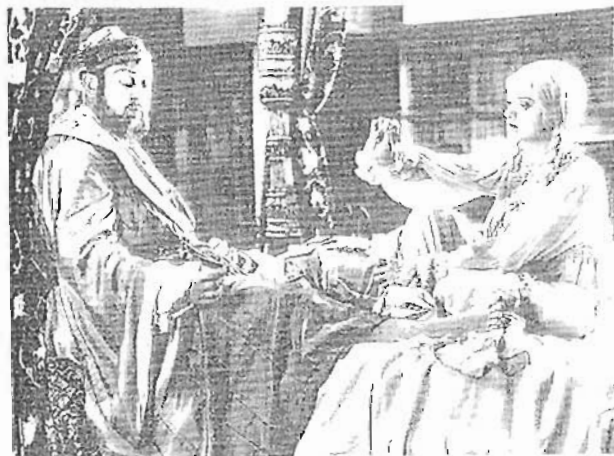
In order to recoup his losses and satisfy the Prudential, Alex decided to make another film with Laughton and Merle. He did not wish to lose Laughton to Hollywood, for in spite of his very complex character Laughton was an intelligent actor. Alex also wanted to find a starring role for Merle, with whom he was falling in love. When he read Robert Graves's novel *I, Claudius* about the Roman Emperor at the birth of Christianity, Alex thought he had the answer to both problems. The role of Claudius posed an enormous challenge for Laughton. With Henry VIII he had been able to burlesque the

role; with Rembrandt he had accurately portrayed the painter's tragic feelings; but *Claudius* was a puzzle. Laughton had to play a stammering fool, a clumsy cripple, sexually inept in the eyes of his court, cuckolded, and innocent about women. He felt decidedly uneasy.

By this time Alex was fully occupied running his new studio, trying to keep all the stages fully occupied to cover the enormous weekly overheads. He decided not to direct *I, Claudius* himself, but felt that there was too

much at stake to engage a minor English director. He found that Josef Von Sternberg, who had propelled Marlene Dietrich to fame in *The Blue Angel*, lay ill in the London Clinic. Assuming that he could do for Merle what he had done for Marlene, Alex visited Von Sternberg with a basket of fruit from Fortnum and Masons and the script of *I, Claudius*. Unknown to Alex, Von Sternberg's Hollywood career was on the decline, and his affair with Marlene almost over. Only a box office hit could save him. So with very little persuasion Von Sternberg accepted the assignment.

When he heard that Alex was not going to direct the picture Laughton was very upset, but he accepted Von Sternberg who had befriended him in Hollywood some years earlier. Meanwhile he was trying to find a way of portraying Claudius, and frequently prowled around his house dressed in a toga. But no matter how hard he tried to find his way into the part, the character baffled him. He got no help from Von Sternberg, who regarded his inability to 'find' Claudius as a sign of weakness. Laughton thought that he'd found the solution to Claudius' voice in a recording of the then Prince of Wales, but Alex would



Charles Laughton plays cards with Elsa Lanchester (as Anne of Cleves) in *Private Life of Henry VIII*



Alex Korda behind the camera complete with hat, glasses and cigar

not consider any attempt to imitate a member of the Royal Family.

Whereas Alex was a patient and sympathetic director, always offering advice and moulding his artistes into their roles, Von Sternberg was cold and demanding on the set with the style of a Prussian sergeant-major. He was the last director to wear a special costume, and always appeared dressed in riding breeches, polished field boots and a leather jacket, topped off with a silk bandanna! Once shooting began, each day was torture for Laughton. He fluffed his lines, dried up, and even refused to appear on the set. Receiving no guidance at all from Von Sternberg, he simply wandered about seeking inspiration. In an effort to get something on film which was usable, Von Sternberg had several sets erected and lit simultaneously. He was becoming as distraught as Laughton, whom he treated with disdain. He thought that a softer approach would be a mistake, and hoped to shame Laughton into coming to grips with the role. The result was disastrous.



The newly weds - Alex with his new bride Merle Oberon

Von Sternberg's growing contempt made Laughton even more nervous, and the entire cast and crew watched in disbelief as the production began to crumble. Alex was frequently called on to the set to arbitrate between the raging Von Sternberg and the despondent Laughton, who fled from one set to another to escape his director! As production costs soared with very little result, the production attracted the attention of the men from the Pru, who were not used to financing unprofitable ventures. It was obvious that something had to be done.

Production of *I, Claudius* was suddenly halted by a most dramatic incident. As Merle Oberon was being driven to a costume fitting one morning, the studio car was involved in a crash and she was thrown through the windscreen! She suffered

severe facial cuts and bad concussion, and Alex thought she would be scarred for life. He soon came to realise that here was a heaven sent opportunity to dispose of *I, Claudius* once and for all, and production was immediately terminated on the grounds that Merle could no longer continue. Too much footage had been shot with her in it to even think of re-shooting with another leading lady, so Alex merely claimed on insurance and left the Pru to pick up the tab!

After *I, Claudius* folded, Laughton went off to Paris to take the lead in a French comedy. Von Sternberg returned to Hollywood to pick up the threads of his career and Alex drove up to town in his Rolls-Royce to explain things to the Pru. Their huge investment in him was based on the financial success in the world market of one film, *Henry VIII*, a success which was never to be repeated. Alex was told that the management of Denham Studios was to be taken away from him, which in fact came as a great relief instead of a disappointment. He could now concentrate on what he enjoyed doing best, producing and directing. He still retained his penthouse at Claridges and his offices in Piccadilly, but the subject of *I, Claudius* remained an inflammable one and was not talked about again.

Alex did not see Laughton for another 20 years, by which time he had not only married Merle Oberon but divorced her as well! Alex's London Film Productions are occasionally seen on television, and there was great interest in the showing of the edited footage of *I, Claudius*, the first time any of it had been seen in public. It would have made a great picture, but maybe it was destined to become the film that never was.

JOHN ALDRED

( Taken from the memoirs of Peter Korda, Alex's nephew)



## PROTECT YOUR CAR

*against theft*

Locks may be picked or  
jimmied. Cars may be  
stolen in spite of them

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can tell it isn't a real, live man.

When not in use, this marvellous device is simply  
deflated and put under the seat. Easily inflated  
with your hand, or automatic pump. Price \$15.

Order through your dealer or direct from  
**BOSCO, Inc., Akron, Ohio**



# CAUGHT BY THE CAMERA



*JOHN MITCHELL RECEIVES HIS MBE  
FROM HM QUEEN ELIZABETH*



*SIR (HONORARY) STEVEN SPIELBERG*



*WALTER MURCH WITH HIS DOUBLE OSCARS  
FOR THE ENGLISH PATIENT (1997)  
SOUND AND EDITING*



*FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA DIRECTS THE CREATION  
OF HIS FAMOUS RUBICON BLEND*





From L to r, Brendan Nicholson, Sandy Buchanan, Mike Carter, Nic Le Messurier, Graham Hartstone, John Hayward, Kevin Tayler, Richard Fryke, Tony Cleal.

### THE PINEWOOD RERECORDING GANG



CAN YOU SPOT AMPS' SECRETARY?



COLIN WOOD, DAVID STEPHENSON, JEAN BAPTISTE MICHON  
HOLD ALL THE ACES ON 'DOUBLE DOWN' IN SOUTH OF FRANCE  
(Pic DAVID APPLEBY)



IVAN SHARROCK ON SET WITH MATT DAMON  
AND THE NAGRA D



"YOU HAVE TO HAVE A GOOD DIALOGUE TRACK  
TO GET A GOOD FINAL SOUNDTRACK" : NICHOLAS LOWE



# THE ALL TALKING PICTURE

Radio broadcasting expanded rapidly in the 1920s and cinema audiences began to decline, the public preferring the spoken word to the silent image. Live acts were introduced into film programmes in an attempt to increase box office takings, but it was an open secret that sound films were on their way. Some producers were sceptical and thought that hearing artistes speak would damage the ears of the audience, whilst many of the silent stars wondered if they could gesticulate and say lines of dialogue at the same time.

The studios inaugurated a crash programme to find out how many of their contract artistes had a voice which would record satisfactorily.

A recording stage was acoustically treated, and the artistes called in one at a time. Whilst the others waited nervously outside, an assistant would come rushing out and perhaps say "Wallace Beery has a voice!" Among the casualties were John Gilbert, Emil Jannings, Lillian Gish and Buster Keaton. Survivors included John Barrymore, Ronald Coleman, Gary Cooper and Greta Garbo. New actors and actresses were brought in from Broadway since they were already used to acting and speaking simultaneously. These stage artistes were used to projecting their voices in live theatre and had no experience of microphones, so they appeared to be shouting all the time. The silent artistes had not been trained to speak and had squeaky voices by comparison.

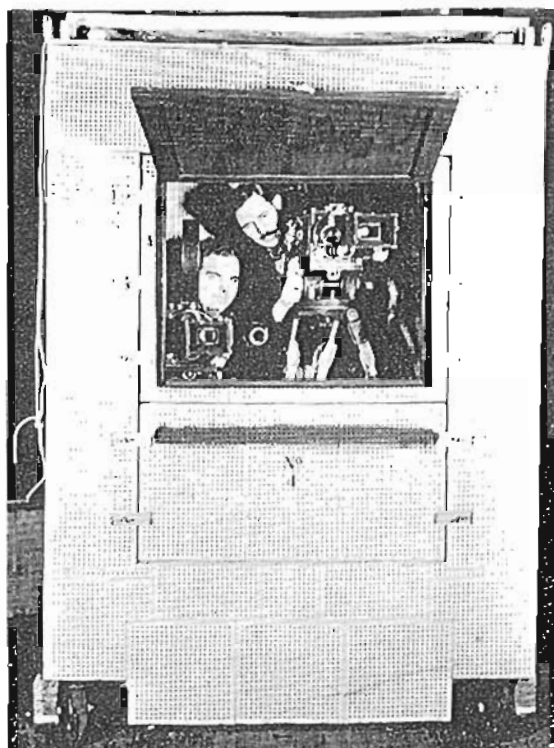
For a while the sound man was the most important man on the set, and since nobody knew what he was up to in his recording room he could get away with anything. The first recording systems were pretty basic and microphones had to be positioned as close to the artistes as possible - often hidden in a bowl of flowers. Microphones suspended overhead caused numerous shadows which the lighting cameraman had to eliminate,

creating a feud between camera and sound departments which lasted for many years. There were problems with overload (no limiters or compressors in those days), hum from the carbon arcs, and birds which became trapped in the studio roof. Sound editing was non-existent so everything had to be recorded at the same time. Property men stood near microphones to rustle paper, strike a match, or introduce footsteps, a technique borrowed from radio. Studios put up barrage balloons to keep low flying aircraft away, and re-scheduled the working day from 5pm to 3am since there was less downtown traffic during these hours.

Directors were suddenly hamstrung because, after enjoying camera movement in silent films, the camera and operator were imprisoned in a soundproof booth with a limited field of view. Many stage plays were filmed but they appeared rather static, so multiple cameras were used so that the editor could construct a sequence synchronised to a single sound track. There were no ground rules for sound editing. One frustrated director at MGM dragged the camera out of its booth and covered it with blankets to deaden the noise. His action soon led to the design of a camera blimp, mounted on a dolly for tracking.

Script writers had yet to come to terms with writing good screen dialogue, the result being often trite and unconvincing. The effect of this was that audiences roared with laughter! Studio publicity departments would

announce a new production as "Part Talking Picture", then "Mostly Talking Picture", and finally "All Talking Picture". Warners' *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was only a part talking picture, because when Al Jolson finished his musical numbers the film reverted to being silent with dialogue in sub-titles. The first all talking picture was *The Lights of New York* (1928) which had dialogue throughout its entire length. It was also the first picture to be



CAMERA SOUND-PROOF BOOTH SARCASTICALLY KNOWN AS 'THE ICE BOX'



ROOF OF MGM STUDIOS TO WARN PLANES

completely rerecorded.

MGM was the last studio to go over to sound in 1929 with a musical called *Broadway Melody*, which gained an Oscar for Best Picture. The first British all-talking picture was Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929) which started as a silent film and switched to sound half way through. The female lead was a young Czech girl named Anny Ondra, whose English accent was appalling. So Hitchcock engaged an British actress to stand by the side of the camera with a second microphone, whilst Anny 'mimed' her lines. This is believed to be the first use of sound 'dubbing'.

JOHN ALDRIP



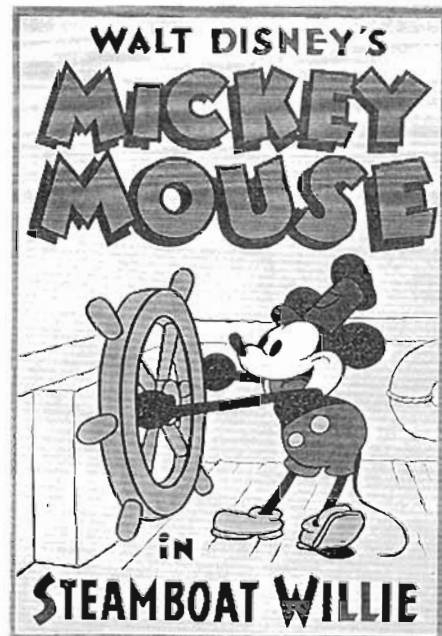
# CENTENARY OF WALT DISNEY'S BIRTH

## PICTURES FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF MICKEY MOUSE



WALT DISNEY AND FRIEND  
WALT BORN DECEMBER 5TH 1901  
DIED DECEMBER 15TH 1966  
BUT MICKEY DIDN'T

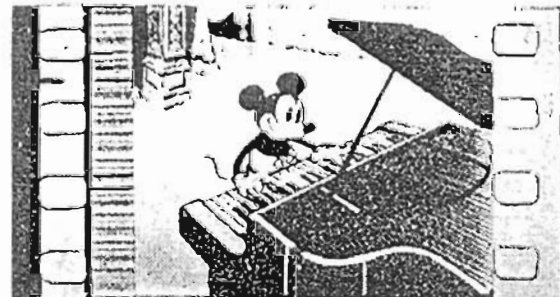
MICKEY'S DEBUT 1928



THE FIRST ANIMATED CARTOON FILM WITH  
SYNCHRONISED SOUND. RECORDED ON POWERS  
CINEPHONE, A GLOW LAMP SOUND-ON-FILM SYSTEM



PINTO COLVIG, ONCE A CIRCUS BARKER,  
WHO DID VOICES FOR MICKEY CARTOONS,  
HERE EMITTING A HOWL FOR MICKEY'S  
CANINE FRIEND, PLUTO. WALT ALWAYS  
DID THE VOICE OF MICKEY HIMSELF



ENLARGED FRAME FROM EARLY CARTOON  
SHOWING CINEPHONE VARIABLE DENSITY TRACK



A SOUND EFFECTS SESSION AT DISNEY STUDIOS  
(FOLEY NAME NOT YET INVENTED)

AND STILL TODAY, THE 73-YEAR OLD  
MOUSE IS GIVING PLEASURE TO KIDS  
- AND GROWNUPS TOO





## BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

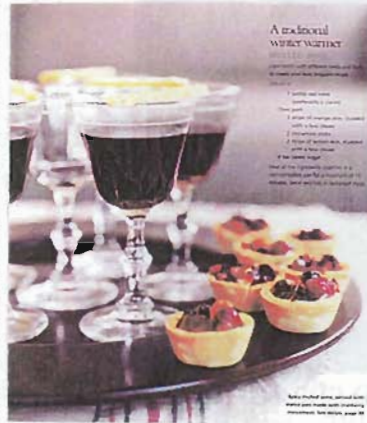


~ CHRISTMAS CHEER ~

### A TRADITIONAL WINTER WARMER

#### - MULLED WINE

To serve 6 - one bottle red wine (preferably a claret); 75ml port; 3 strips of orange skin studded with a few cloves; 2 cinnamon sticks; 2 strips lemon skin studded with a few cloves; 4 teaspoons of caster sugar. Heat all the ingredients together in a non-corrodible pan for a minimum of 15 minutes. Serve hot.



### A PARTY FAVOURITE - POINSETTIA

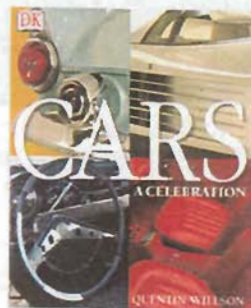
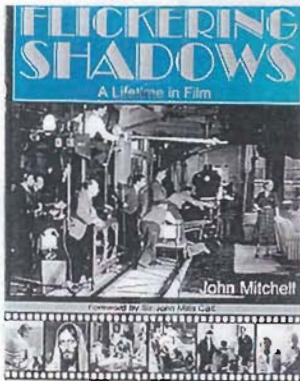
A festive champagne cocktail suitable for any time of the day or night. 15ml of Cointreau; 20ml of cranberry juice; champagne to fill. Put Cointreau and cranberry juice into a champagne flute. Fill with champagne and stir gently. Serve with thirst inducing salty nibbles.



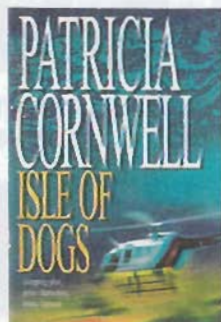
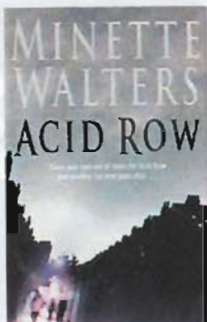
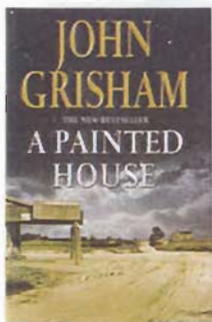
### MOCKTAIL FOR KIDS AND DRIVERS

#### - PUSSYFOOT

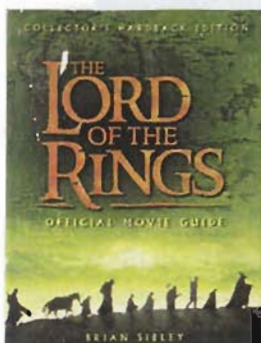
A fun fruity non-alcoholic drink. 50ml cranberry juice; 50ml fresh orange juice; 50ml grapefruit juice; 50ml pineapple juice; large dash of grenadine. Add all ingredients to a shaker with ice. Shake sharply and strain into a highball glass filled with ice. Garnish with a thin slice of orange and serve with two straws.



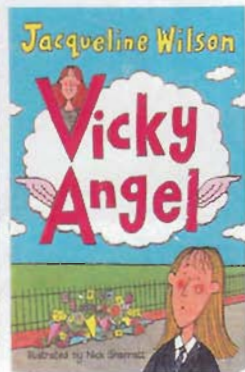
### FICTION



### KIDS' FICTION



Official Movie Guide





# ENGLISH IS BEST

## WOULDN'T GIVE YOU TUPPENCE FOR ALL THE REST

AMPS Hon Member Peter Davies, who lives in Switzerland, thought members in the UK would be interested in the following item.

“The European Union commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short). In the first year, 's' will be used instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants will resieve this news with joy. Also, the hard 'c' will be replaced with 'k'. Not only will this klear up konfusion, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome 'ph' will be replaced by 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20 per sent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' by 'z' and 'w' by 'v'. During ze fifz year, ze unesesary 'o' kan be dropd from vords kontaining 'o', and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a refi sensibl riten styl. Zer vil b no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru. ”

Clearing up spelling anomalies in the English language is perhaps a good idea. However if it were to result in anything like the above it would do little to help those non-English speakers who penned the following collection of notices.

We take you bags and send them in all directions -  
Copenhagen airline office

You are invited to take advantage of the  
chambermaid - Japanese hotel notice

Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar  
- cocktail bar in Norway

In the event of fire do your utmost to alarm the porter  
- hotel in Vienna

Swimming is forbidden in the absence of the saviour  
- notice in French swimming pool

Ladies are not allowed to be received in the client  
room unless that lady is the wife of the client - hotel  
in Yemen

After 10pm the hotel visitors are not allowed to have  
any discussions with outside visitors in the room but  
can have them in the cafeteria hall or restaurant  
until 12pm - hotel in Yemen

Able to speak only one language (New Zealand  
English) I take my hat off to those foreign persons  
who wrote the above signs. They did at least make  
clear what was intended.

However, those responsible for the following  
safety instructions should have been more careful  
especially as for most of them, English is their native  
tongue.

Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly  
- warning on child's Superman costume

Warning may cause drowsiness - printed on the  
label of Nytol Sleep Aid

Do not drive a car or operate machinery after  
taking this mixture - warning on proprietary brand  
of children's cough mixture.

Not to be used for the other use - instructions on a  
food processor made in Japan

BOB ALLEN

## WHAT THEY SAID:

The movies set the pattern, and these people have  
copied the movies - how dare we continue to show  
this kind of mass destruction in movies?  
- Robert Altman, Director speaking about terrorism

As I hurtled through space one thought kept  
crossing my mind - every part of this capsule was  
supplied by the lowest bidder - John Glenn,  
pioneer astronaut

They want women with cute faces, cute bottoms,  
and nothing else in between - Kate Adie on what TV  
bosses want from women reporters

When I was young, a glimpse of petticoat made the  
pulse race and a plunging cleavage made the heart  
stop - Joan Bakewell, who has been investigating  
censorship

Everybody started doing it - record executives,  
bankers, milkmen, I thought. "This is very uncool",  
so I stopped. - Sir Paul McCartney on giving up  
cocaine.

No matter how you edit Pretty Woman, Julia  
Roberts is still a prostitute - Ray Lines, of 'Clean  
Flicks', whose Utah video shop does a roaring trade  
in films with sex and violence scenes edited out

This car is absolutely unique except for the one  
behind it which is exactly the same - Murray Walker,  
Formula 1 race commentator

I'm not a big filmophile. I don't watch movies a lot  
for a hobby. I spend all my time watching sporting  
events. Unlike movies you can never tell how  
sporting events are going to end - Michael Douglas,  
film actor / producer.

# MORE MOVIE CLICHES



**Silenced Gun Shots** - A revolver can not be silenced by screwing a silencer to the front of the barrel - the sound comes from the gap between the frame and cylinder. Only closed breach weapons can be silenced by muzzling the barrel.

In a hand gun fight when one or the other of the protagonists runs out of ammunition, the gun goes click, click, the actor then in frustration throws the gun at his opponent.

**Sound in space** - rocket ship sounds and other sounds could not be heard in outer space owing to lack of air to transmit them (screen writers please note).

Any baby in a movie will inevitably wet or sick on anyone who picks it up.

Anyone climbing on to the roof of a warehouse will not be seen by anyone walking beneath. This also applies to anyone hiding in a tree. If the good guy is hiding on a roof or up a tree, the bad guy will always stop directly underneath so that the good guy can drop on him.

In a crime thriller when the hero knocks on a partly open door the door will swing gently inwards and there will be a dead body inside.

Every time someone uses a public address microphone the announcement will start with a squeal of feedback.

When the hero / heroine pursued by the killer jumps in a car the car will refuse to start. There then follows a series of shots - C.U. hero/heroine sweating - focus pulled and zoom out to reveal killer approaching - C.U. hand on ignition key sound of engine still failing to start. This sequence of shots repeats as many times as necessary for timing the killer's approach until - as killer reaches the car, ignition fires and car pulls away with screeching wheel spin.

When a woman gets into a car she will inevitably have trouble starting the engine, her male partner will tell her to move over for him to try and the car will start at his first turn of the key.

Plain female secretaries wearing horn rimmed glasses with their hair tied up in a severe bun will always at some point in the story remove their spectacles, let down their hair and become the most attractive, sexy female in the movie.

In car chases there is almost always a stack of large cardboard boxes that one of the cars will crash into scattering the boxes, that if they were full would stop the car dead.

Movie heroes who fall from great heights land on bushes or something soft that cushions their fall. Villains land on skull cracking rocks or are impaled on spiked fences if not in front of speeding trains.

Judging by the ease with which the luggage of travelling actors and actresses is carried, the cases are empty.

Shopping from any grocery super market will always be in a full carrier bag supported in the actress' /actor's arms with a French loaf sticking out.

In American movies, seedy hotel rooms always have a neon sign outside the window that flashes on and off, lighting up the depressing dimly lit room.

In American court room dramas, the judge will nowadays invariably be black. At a crucial point in the trial he will adjourn the proceedings until Monday morning at 9 o'clock, thus allowing the defence or prosecution to get their act together.

In prison execution scripts, law authorities always wait until a split second before the switch (usually a two-pole knife-type) is pulled, to phone through the reprieve. Shots cut back and forth between the prison governor sitting by the phone - C.U. the large knife switch - C.U. phone at death cell end - C.U. hand on switch. C.U. phone ringing - a warder answers phone signals to man on switch - C.U. hand removed from switch.

Set designs where artists are seen in an exterior shot going up steps to a house entrance, when the door is answered from inside they step down into the room.

## Most Over-used Lines:

"We've got to talk" which however in American movies is said as "We've got to *to*c".

"I did what I had to do", or he/she did what he/she had to do.

"You've got to stop running away from yourself" - friendly advice given to the hero who has been crossed in love or given up fighting for his/her beliefs. Version two could be hero saying "I'm going to stop running" meaning he/she is going to change attitude to life.

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## W.R.A.P

I was asked the other day whether there was any truth in the story that appears to be going round that the origin of the word 'wrap' (as in "It's a wrap, chaps!") was that it was an acronym for "Wind Reel And Print", whatever that may have meant. I was unable to pronounce on this and began to make enquiries. The majority of answers I have received suggest that it referred to the wrapping of cables at the end of the day, and the Oxford English Dictionary has just this meaning: a winding up of flexible objects, as one of the specialised definitions of Wrap, or the covering of props.

I wonder if any AMPS members have more ideas on the origin of that most favourite of words one can hear?

NICK FLOWERS

*Replies please. Ed*



## ERIC PALMER Hon AMPS

Sadly, Eric Palmer died on 4th August 2001. He was well known and respected for his long service as Chief Projectionist at 3 Audley Square. Over a period of more than forty years Eric worked, first with Gerry Cassidy during the days of the Audley Square Preview Theatre, then continuing his good work when Mayflower Studios took over the building under my management in 1981.

Eric joined AMPS as an Associate Member in 1990 and was subsequently made an Honorary Member upon his retirement.

During his long career Eric had the advantage of meeting a very large and sophisticated clientele including numerous film stars, pop stars, producers, directors, editors and technicians. He made it part of his job to look after their needs, using his natural charm and humour. Eric also had the ability to make them feel at home, and his intuitive nature allowed him to reach just the right level of approach.... he also had the gift of knowing exactly how to keep people happy in a very discrete way.

If we consider that Eric began showing rushes, cutting copies and preview shows as far back as 1955, it indicates that the flow of product going through the facility over many years was phenomenal.

In those days the building belonged to Cubby Broccoli and Irving Allen under the name of Warwick Films. As wealthy Americans they designed and built this luxury preview theatre in the basement at 3 Audley Square, along with other 'indulgences' such as a sauna. In those humble days a sauna was unheard of.... Eric's story goes that on opening day after the usual celebrations Irving and Cubby clad in their towels headed into the 'hot' sauna room....unknown to them the 'heat generating' unit containing the stones (cold water is traditionally poured on them to create 'humid heat'), was filled with pebbles from a Sussex seaside beach....it was never quite clear exactly how they got there! But when cold water was poured over them these particular stones exploded sending bits of granite flying in all directions like mini hand grenades....the mind boggles at the thought of Cubby and Irving running for safety (naked?).

In its heyday Warwick boosted the ailing British Film industry by producing a whole series of hit films and brought over many American stars of the 1950/60 era, such as John Wayne, Gary Cooper, Robert Mitchum, Rita Hayworth, Alan Ladd, Victor Mature, Jack Lemmon, Liz Taylor and many others. They were frequently in and out of the viewing theatre needing hospitality, and Eric helped provide it! Parties were held there and the facility developed a high profile for elite screenings and functions.

The Royal Family were regularly in attendance for private screenings. Another favourite story of Eric's was the occasion when the Queen and guests attended a preview of the TV series about the real Royal Family in the seventies. Her Majesty kicked off one of her shoes during the show and due to the slope of the floor it must have rolled down several rows....Eric had to play 'Hunt the Royal Slipper' to the amusement of the onlookers!

To add to the volume of work David Lean moved into 3 Audley Square around 1961 to edit *Lawrence of Arabia* and became a regular client in the viewing theatre. The projection and technical quality had to be nothing but 'the best'....and Eric 'saw to it'.

The next phase was the *James Bond* period.

Producer Cubby Broccoli owned the building and had offices there with his associate Harry Saltzman. In 1962 more cutting rooms were opened on the upper floors to edit the Bond films 'in house'. This meant that the preview theatre became home for most of the post production viewing on the early Bond films. *Dr No* and *From Russia With Love*, followed by *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball*. Eric was kept very busy keeping them happy!

Then came the Beatles film production era around 1964/65. The Beatles with their then

manager Brian Epstein chose to adopt the Audley Square venue as their screening room for rushes and viewings for *A Hard Day's Night* followed by *Help*. This led to regular feature film shows and parties for the Beatles every Friday night....they and their friends would show up for a 'mystery presentation'. Eric took most of the responsibility for organising the catering requirements as well as the technical presentation....and he revelled in all of it!

John Daly of Hemdale took over the building in the 1970's and the Audley Square Theatre remained popular because it provided a specialised service and therefore always had the top clientele.

Mayflower Studios opened there in 1980 and established a major change to the facility. The viewing theatre and adjoining rooms were successfully converted into a recording studio. The quality of work remained prestigious and Eric quickly adapted to the demands of high speed ADR.

Mayflower Studio soon became a favourite throughout the industry and Eric's contribution was more valuable than ever....as well as the technical presentation he would look after the clients during the long days in the studio and chat to the actors while they waited to be 'called'. This helped to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere contributing much to the high reputation of the studio.

Eric was an intelligent, generous and considerate man and he will always be remembered as a good friend and a popular figure amongst his fellow workers. He will be sadly missed.

LIONEL STRUTT



## THE BASQUE FATHER CHRISTMAS

A long time ago there was a fairy who lived in the woods of the Basque country, an area between north east Spain and south west France. One day the fairy found an abandoned baby in the bushes. She took it to a childless couple living in the mountains, who raised the baby as their own calling it *El Olentzero*. Some time later after the couple had died, the child continued to live in the mountains, earning money by selling coal found on the surface.

As he got older he began to make toys in his spare time for orphaned children in a nearby town, and the inhabitants developed a deep affection for him. One day he saw a house in the town struck by lightning and burst into flames. He dashed inside hoping to rescue the children, but was killed instantly by a falling beam. But the fairy brought him back to life on one condition, that he must continue to make and deliver toys to the children.

Basque children are raised on the tale of *El Olentzero*, and over the years he has become the Basque Father Christmas. Popular stories also tell how he was the coalman who lived in the mountains and came down to announce the birth of Jesus. Whoever he was, *El Olentzero* arrives in all the Basque towns every 24th December, wearing a blue uniform and a beret, often accompanied by carol singers singing in the Basque language. He is much preferred to the more traditional Papa Noel dressed in red, who is considered to be too American!

JOHN ALDRED

'El Olentzero'



*Red and cuddly? No, he's a Coalman!*



A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS  
2002  
TO ALL  
AMPS MEMBERS  
AND  
FRIENDS

~  
SEE YOU AT THE AGM  
&  
SUSTAINING MEMBERS SHOW  
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 10TH 2002