

Rare Raycophone Sound Head found - *Richard Ashton*

Ian Stimson says a sound head which has been sitting under one of my Austral projectors may be a very early experimental Raycophone model.

In 1930 this projector was run by country showman Selby Ford of Beverly. Enterprising Selby built an aeroplane, ran the local powerhouse, and the picture show which was next door. When this equipment was stripped down recently for restoration work, the original factory maroon colour paintwork was discovered. This was the first clue to it's Raycophone heritage. It led to closer examination of the unusual sound tube which is unique in design and unlike any Raycophone of the period. Close examination of the head, which had been arranged to drive the Austral projector by a chain set up, revealed the standard Web pattern ball-bearing holder for the flywheel on standard Raycophone portables.

It was in May 1932 that the Cummings and Wilson's projector heads were first used by Raycophone for their junior portables. Prior to this, no junior portables had been advertised. So some of their sound heads could have been fitted with Austral or other makes of projector heads during the portables development stage.



In the photo above, the unusual sound tube (above) is shown contrasted with the standard tube (below) on all portables from their advertised introduction. The slit is also unusual being removable and is pictured between the two sound tubes. It is fitted halfway down the tube in a slot, and held in place by a set screw. The sound tube features six internal condenser lenses which are also of unusual design.

This sound head is driven by the normal very heavy split double grooved flywheel driving the sound sprocket, this having the standard spring shock absorber system designed to remove wow and flutter on these portables. On close examination, the sound head sprocket is not C&W, but an RCA holdback one, and the curved head shoe film holders are also of a most unusual design.

Oral History Crew formed

With the increasing frequency of funerals of pioneers of both the cinema and television industries, the urgency of recording both orally and on video, the stories of those people becomes even more urgent. Fortunately many of those local identities who have already passed on have already been interviewed in recent years by dedicated individuals such as **Dr. Ina Bertrand**, the late **Barrie King** and some ad-hoc attempts two years ago by some of our own Members. On the National scene, the NFSA has coordinated its efforts through its Melbourne based specialist **Ken Berryman**, while in Sydney, **Martha Ansara** a.c.s. has also covered a great many of the industry pioneers. However a lot more work needs to be done, and as reported in the last edition, has resulted in the AMMPT Western Region branch appointing a local team dedicated to the task. As other AMMPT projects evolve requiring some Member's expertise being re-directed to these areas, it has now become necessary to slightly re-arrange our oral history team.



Oral History team leader, Bridget Curran inspects a 35mm/16mm 4 plate Intercine film editing and viewing machine recently donated by her employer and long time local film industry producer Carmelo Musca of CM Films. Apart from future inclusion in a permanent exhibition, the machine will initially be put to good use by our historical film team inspecting donated film material to determine if it would be suitable for either the State or National Archives.

The team is now to be coordinated by recently joined Member **Bridget Curran**, bringing with her most valuable research and organisational abilities. The other two Members of the team are **Ian Stimson**, with his knowledge of the local cinema industry and its equipment, and **Derrick Wright**, a respected and long time member of the local television industry. The team will be assisted by other Members, drawing on their particular areas of expertise and knowledge of the location of prospective interviewees. If any Member knows of an industry pioneer who may have faded from the scene in recent times, but is still coherent enough to do an interview, can you please contact Bridget who will include it in her schedule. Her home phone number is **9275 4570** or mobile **0401 063 929**.