



## Another Widescreen Weekend triumph for the Bradford Team.

Once again a fascinating mixture of cinema professionals, enthusiasts and downright fanatics came together in Bradford for the annual WSW. Such occasions are always a mix of technical, artistic, and personal recollections, and *Cinema Technology* is fortunate this year to have received two sets of personal views of the weekend. Thanks to Thomas Hauerslev from Denmark for writing a comprehensive review with some excellent pictures (there is a much longer version on his website!), and to Mike Taylor of the Projected Picture Trust for allowing us to pick the bones from his article for the PPT magazine.



For the ninth year in a row I left Denmark and flew to Bradford in England to participate in five exhausting days of hard-core large format movie going. It's tough to attend the Widescreen Weekend, little sleep and a lot of beer. For a complete record of the events, please have a look at [www.in70mm.com](http://www.in70mm.com) as this article is only THE HIGHLIGHTS.

Originally I had planned to arrive sometime around 17:30, wanting to see "Apollo 13" in IMAX at 18:00, but bad train connections meant I had to miss it, since I arrived during heavy rain at 18.10, nearly drowning on my way to the hotel! I saw "The Longest Day" in 70mm 6-track magnetic stereo on the flat screen. Due to the age of the print there were a couple of unscheduled stops during the first reel. Nice directional dialogue, flyovers and effects and a 15 minutes intermission.

Next day, I didn't see "This is Cinerama" on the curve, but instead took the opportunity to

study how Cinerama is projected for an upcoming article for *Cinemeccanica*. First film for me on Friday afternoon was "The Lion in Winter" in 70mm, which I had never seen. Bill Lawrence introduced the film by saying that the rights holder turned out to be Studio Canal+, and they were delighted to have the film shown for £500. It was a good solid performance - a bit over-theatrical perhaps. Shown in 6-track magnetic stereo on the curved screen. The print, faded and very brownish, had the overture, intermission and entr'acte intact. During the intermission words like "panel", "70mm" and "curve" were much heard among the audience.

This years reception for the Widescreen Delegates took place in the Pictureville bar. Many complained about the long queue. People want to talk, so next year its back to the original room on the fourth floor. Hooray.

Some friends and I spent time with Jack Cardiff and his wife. Jack told us stories from his life as a cinematographer, which includes classics like "The African Queen", and "Scent of Mystery" filmed in Smell-O-Vision, which he also directed. The smells for the film didn't work at all, he recalled. They all just smelled of perfume.



Jack also photographed the first Showscan film, "New Magic".

I had 3 glasses of red wine - which in the end turned out to be too much, as I fell asleep from time to time during "Lord Jim". Well, I can only say it WAS boring. New 70mm print shown in 6-track Dolby SR magnetic stereo on the curved screen. This was a smashingly good-looking print, with an intermission. Tony Sloman slept through most of it, he told me. All things said, though, Columbia Pictures are to be congratulated for reprinting "Lord Jim" and making the new print available for screenings.

Saturday was extremely windy with gales up to 70 mph. In fact a large window blew out of an office upstairs from the Pictureville cinema foyer. Nobody was hurt. The wind was also interfering with ventilation and the projection as a xenon lamp went out for a few seconds during "Cinerama's Russian Adventure", which was filmed in Sovcolor 3-strip Kinopanorama and shown in 70mm and 6-track magnetic stereo on the curved screen.

The story of this screening is interesting. Mr. Ramon Lamarca, of Spanish origin and now working in London, had spent nearly a year looking for 70mm prints in Spain and South America for the Widescreen Weekend. The Argentinean film museum in Buenos Aires has a collection of films and memorabilia - and a 70mm print of "Cinerama's Russian Adventure"; however, they were unable to run it. So they offered the museum their 70mm print for £1000. Friends

of the museum came to help financially to buy the print. The print turned out to be rubbish, smelled terribly of vinegar and was impossible to run. It had actually shrunk so much it could not go into the splicer. Unbelievably, another runnable 70mm print was retrieved from Germany. There were two breakdowns during the performance, but considering the age of the print, it's a miracle there weren't more.

There was an interesting Screen Talk with Jack Cardiff & Herbert Lom, moderated by Bill Lawrence. Mr. Herbert Lom reminisced about the production of "War and Peace". One particularly funny story was about Henry Fonda complaining about a script, and if the line could be changed. "It doesn't sound real", Fonda told producer DeLaurentis, who replied to him, "No Hank, it's a movie - get on with it". Sheldon Hall from the audience asked Herbert how he would rate "War and Peace", and the reply was "I don't rate it at all".

Jack made the audience roar with laughter with a story about actress Anita Ekberg's bosom and a blackout in a lift. Jack was to shoot some still pictures of Anita who was a very tall and world-renowned for her considerable bosom.





She came to his flat for the photo session and Jack took her up in the lift. Since Jack is relatively short, and Italian lifts are very small there was just room for both in the lift. Imagine Jack staring right into Anita's bosom - and then the lights went out! He was standing there in this very confined lift literally with his face buried in Anita's bosom for 15 minutes. Ah, the perils of a working photographer!

A new 70mm print of "It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World" was shown in 6-track DTS discrete sound with an overture, police calls during intermission



and play out music on the curved screen. The 70mm print came directly from a previous engagement in Seattle, USA. Originally released November 7, 1963 at the Cinerama Dome in Los Angeles.

Tony Sloman introduced the film and read the notes provided by John Kirk (MGM) about the new print. The projection team had tested the lens in advance only to find the resultant picture to be slightly out of focus. On top of that, the Ultra Panavision 70 image was considerably letterboxed on the Cinerama curve and a foot short on each side. In the end it was decided to run the film with out de-anamorphing the image to get the largest and sharpest picture.

It was not that objectionable. From where I sat, slightly off to the left, the image looked great. The right side of the image was completely normal and then progressively more and more squeezed to the left. The new print received substantial applause from the audience

I met Herbert Lom in the hotel corridor the next morning and expressed my thanks for his autograph the previous day and of course his work in cinema. It's an odd feeling to meet a celebrity face to face in the hotel foyer. He was heading for his breakfast and I for Pictureville and Cineramacana. Cineramacana is *the* opportunity to see some odd reels and rare short subjects. You never know what is going to turn up from the audience. Duncan and I had semi-planned the program off and on during Friday and Saturday, and now was the premiere. As usual we had too much material for the 2½-hour show, and had to be precise. It all turned out fine, only 10 minutes behind schedule, finishing 10 minutes before "Hamlet". The show always includes the "Audience on Stage" picture" (Since 1998, a picture has been taken of the audience on stage in front of the huge Cinerama screen) and the newest Widescreen Weekend Academy member inauguration.

I saw "Hamlet" in 1997 and I didn't understand much of it (neither do some native British, I have been told) - even on a second viewing in 35mm with Danish subtitles. This time around it was pure enjoyment, it looked fantastic and the four hours simply rushed by. It was a good 70mm print shown in 6-track Dolby A magnetic stereo (Format 4:3 - stereo surround) on the flat screen. The image was *very* sharp and the film looked absolutely stunning.

Alex Thomson BSC, who



introduced the film, told the audience that Kenneth Branagh had seen "Lawrence of Arabia" in 70mm and felt "Hamlet" should be filmed in 65mm. It was quite difficult to finance as the budget was relatively small. However, thanks to Panavision, Technicolor and Kodak, it all came through and the film was shot in only 9 weeks and 2 days in Panavision System 65. Most of the budget went into building the large main hall

seen in most of the film.

After a short break, Bill Lawrence introduced Alex Thomson on stage for a discussion about his work. Alex Thomson (Age 75) is now retired from photographing films and now edits the BSC Newsletter. He told the audience how difficult it was to shoot "Hamlet" because of all the mirrors and 360 degree pans. The camera was always on the move and the movements had to be coordinated with the dialogue. Which, as we all know, there is a lot of. In Shakespeare's world something as simple as saying "Pass the salt" takes 4 pages.

Much anticipated was the Sensurround performance of "Earthquake" in 70mm in 6-track magnetic stereo and Sensurround on the curved screen. Darren and his crew from York have built their own



Sensurround noise generator based on a 15 second Sensurround noise sample. The 4 speaker cabinets, each contains two 18" Tannoy woofers and an amplifier. The cabinets are far smaller than the original monstrous Sensurround speakers. The York folk gave a splendid performance, wearing hard hats of course, which lived up to the best tradition of SHOW-MANSHIP. Before the film they handed out "My Last Will" to the audience. Two actors, playing engineers were entertaining the audience before the show. During the film they used strobe lighting effects and pumped in smoke during "quake" scenes to add to the illusion of a real earthquake.



Their efforts to make the show an event were highly praised. In fact the audience responded with huge applause after the film.

I only slept 4½ hours and was beginning to wear out. I was looking forward to seeing "55 Days at Peking" in Super Technirama 70 and 6-track magnetic stereo on the curved



screen Monday morning. The print was pink (official 70mm colour) and in French only, and I feared that would discourage many. Happily it didn't.

After the film I left for the airport and returned to Denmark. Eight hours later I was at home, after another wonderful weekend with great company and fantastic films.

#### Audience Comments

- *Adventurous and Unusually Cerebral. Cineramacana: good fun, good value, as always. - Sheldon Hall*
- *Another satisfying and mouth-watering occasion! Herbert Lom and Jack Cardiff were absolute delights. - Terry Ladlow*
- *Programming is going from strength to strength. Cineramacana as always is a*





highlight. - Mark Lyndon

• "A" for effort in terms of presentation. 70mm short films were excellent - David Olstein

• [Fanny's Wedding] Very Evocative & Existential. [Russian Adventure] A lot of rubbish in it. - Barrie Pick

• An absolutely fabulous weekend. [Hamlet] have never seen 70mm image look so good.

Long Live 70mm. - John Stewart

• Long may the Widescreen Weekend Continue. - Joy & John Surtees

• Widescreen Weekend Reception

was a DISASTER. Cineramacana has lost it's way completely. - Brenda & Keith Swadkins

• "Earthquake" was the high point, but I'm a little biased!! - Darren from York

## The Fiftieth Anniversary of VistaVision - Mike Taylor's view of the 10th BRADFORD FILM FESTIVAL WIDESCREEN WEEKEND

March 18th - March 22nd



Mike Taylor at work in Liverpool

2004

This year must go down as one of, if not, the best Widescreen Weekend ever. Bill Lawrence, Head of Film at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television certainly pulled out all the stops to make it so. This year the Widescreen Weekend had been extended by an extra day by starting on the Thursday instead of the Friday. Whether that was justified is down to the views of the delegates present - but with such a diverse programme this year

then maybe it was. The key element in this year's event was the 50th Anniversary of VistaVision. Although the true 'Horizontal' format was not represented, we were treated to several films under the VistaVision banner.

Two notable films were 'Vertigo' in 70mm and 'War and Peace' in 35mm. In the case of the latter, two guest speakers addressed the audience.

Director of Photography Jack Cardiff spoke on shooting in the VistaVision format, and veteran actor Herbert Lom spoke about his part as Napoleon in the film. Head of Yorkshire Film Archive - Tom Vincent presented a paper on VistaVision, the format and its demise.

Fans of Cinerama were not to be disappointed. The popular 'This Is Cinerama' in true three panel presentation has lost none of its sparkle after over fifty years. Pictureville cinema at Bradford is now the only cinema in Europe showing Cinerama. PPT members should make the effort to visit Pictureville and experience this for themselves. Not to be outdone, there was also a 70mm single panel presentation of Cinerama's 'Russian Adventure' - alas very pink now - but very enjoyable all the same.

Then came 70mm. What can one say about that? When fewer main stream cinemas any longer screen 70mm or indeed want to, it is a pleasure and delight to see these films at Bradford. Delegates were treated to three of the best 'Lion In Winter', 'Lord Jim', and 'It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World'. Two notable classics were also on offer. At the start of the



Master Class Lecture  
Bill Lawrence(L), Head of Film, NMPFT talking to veteran Actor Herbert Lom(centre) about playing the part of Napoleon in the film 'War and Peace'. Jack Cardiff (R) spoke about the widescreen process VistaVision and his career in motion pictures.

Widescreen Weekend - 'The Longest Day' was preceded with a superb talk by the British actor Richard Todd. An appreciative audience enjoyed his anecdotes from the making of the film. On the final day - Monday, there was a screening of '55 Days at Peking'. A special lecture on the Sunday featured the distinguished cameraman Alex Thomson - who spoke on the making of 'Hamlet', another film which was well received. A very interesting man with a career in motion pictures to match.

The final film in this section certainly went out with a Bang!!! 'Earthquake', in glorious Technicolour and Sensurround. What a night. The technical crew from City Screen at York installed the Sensurround for the one show only and added some extra special effects of their own. Not seen in this format for a number of years it certainly looked good and sounded good. Well done to the boys from York.

Two final lectures for the technically minded delegates related to the use or mis-use of the 'Curved Screen', by John Belton, and our PPT Chairman Dion Hanson gave a talk on the development and design of the sound system known as 'Perspecta' which was linked to VistaVision and other notable shorts and cartoons.

And finally, to round off the weekend we had the much awaited event 'Cineramacana'. One never knows what will turn up here. From rare trailers, shorts, commercials, in fact anything that delegates have had hidden in cupboards for

years turn up here. One special item this year came from the technical staff at Carlton Television. Who remembers 'Look at Life' or does not want to ??? Well, two of the best editions of this Rank Organisation series 'The Cinema Steps Out', about cinema modernization and wide screen and 'A City Built for Shooting', about the making of '55 Days at Peking', had been restored and transferred to DVD, as film copies were no longer in playable condition.

Then came the Audience on Stage picture - and recipient of the award to the Widescreen Academy. This year it was Tony Sloman, Film Historian and Lecturer on Film Studies. A regular at Widescreen Weekend and supporter of the National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, and without doubt a lover of the 70mm Wide Screen format.

On behalf of The Projected Picture Trust both Nationally and the North West Region in particular a sincere vote of thanks has to go to Bill Lawrence and his staff at Pictureville Bradford for another fantastic event. We say this every year - follow that!! And of course a special thank you to the projection crew who work under extreme pressure to make it all possible. Well done boys and girl (Yes, they do have a lady projectionist).

See you all again at Widescreen 2005. IT WILL BE TODD-AO.

Mike Taylor