



BACK FOCUS

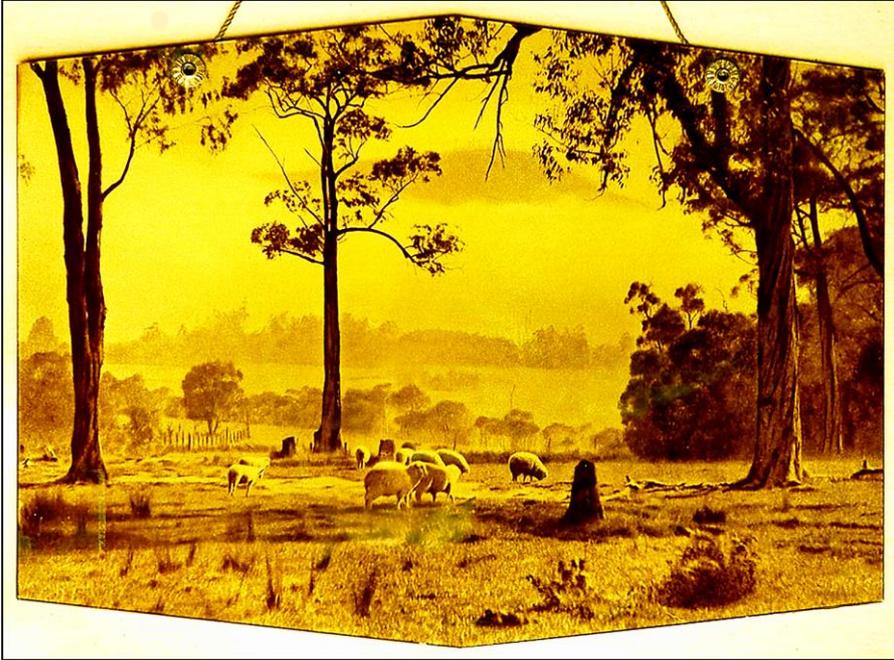
Journal of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society inc.

Incorporation Registration No. A16888V

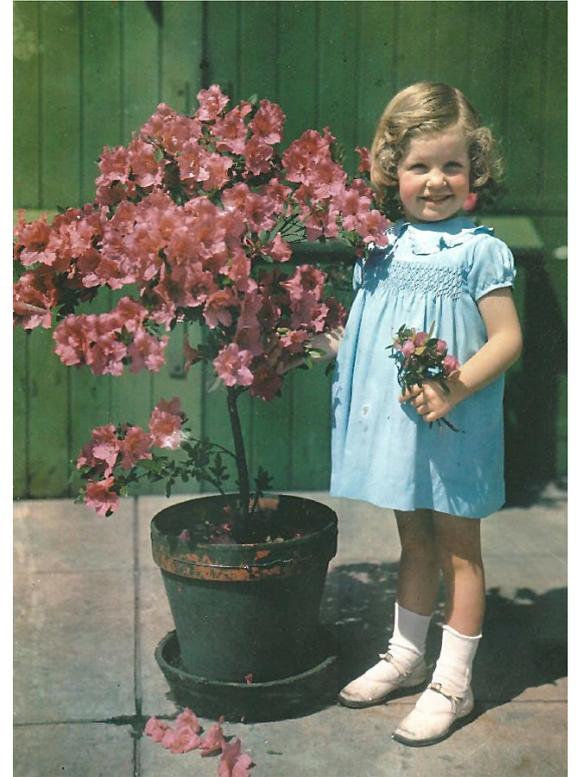
ABN 55 567 464974

Issue No 107

December, 2017



After four years of dedicated research, John Fleming has compiled the story of a pioneering Melbourne suburban studio, Cyril Stevens. Just part of his innovative work was with the Orotone process to produce 'Sun-Gold' photographs and (right) this stunningly beautiful 1939 dye transfer direct natural colour print. A very significant Australian historical photograph.



From Roger Burrows: the story of another Australian company, Paton Electrical and the Patex Exposure Meters.



THE AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTORS SOCIETY Inc.

Incorporation Reg. No. A16888V

ABN 55 567 464 974

OFFICE BEARERS OF THE SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: Rod Reynolds (03) 9853 7821 **VICE PRESIDENT:** Ken Anderson (03) 9457 1985
SECRETARY: Stephen Chung 0425 793 193 **TREASURER:** John Young (03) 9712 0413

COMMITTEE: Ian Carron Leigh Harris Brian Hatfield Kevin Saunders
Margaret Mason Andrew Korlaki David Donaldson

Market Organiser: Leigh Harris. **Web Master:** Rod Reynolds **LIBRARY:** Now held at AMRA Hall.

BACK FOCUS EDITOR- Ian Carron (03 9435 5659) **Article Proof Reader:** John Crossley

Editorial Matters & Back Focus Submissions to:-

Ian Carron. 10 Bicton Street. Greensborough. Victoria. 3088 Australia

Email: backfocus@apcsociety.com.au **If in doubt, please request details for article format required for submissions.**

All **original** articles are **copyright** of the **authors**. Permission may be given to reproduce any **original** Back Focus article by any Society of a non-profit type with similar interests and aims to the Australian Photographic Collectors Society Inc. **on application to the editor**, as long as a credit is given as to the source of material and two complimentary copies sent to the editor at the Greensborough address.

Back Focus is set out by Ian Carron on an I5 Quad CPU 13Ghz IBM compatible computer using Microsoft Word 2013. Four issues p.a.

Society e-mail address: secretary@apcsociety.com.au **Web Site:** www.apcsociety.com.au **Newsletter:** andrew@korlaki.com

Address all Society correspondence to:-

Stephen Chung. 11 Booran Avenue. Glen Waverley. Victoria. 3150 Australia.

Meetings are held at Australian Model Railway Association. 92 Wills Street. Glen Iris.

Hall Open Midday. Meeting commences approx. 1pm.

Membership Subscription, Local & Overseas \$30.00 per annum

Send Subscriptions to: Treasurer, APCS. P.O. Box 126. Kangaroo Ground. Vic. 3097.

BACK FOCUS
PROUDLY PRINTED BY



Minuteman Press
The First & Last Step in Printing.
a member of A.P.C.S.

- Custom Graphic & Logo Design
- Business Cards & Stationery
- Flyers, Postcards, Brochures, Pamphlets
- Invitations, Tickets, Membership Cards
- Greeting Cards, Calendars, Fridge Magnets
- Photocopying, Binding, Laminating
- Posters, Pull Up Banners, Vinyl Banners
- Personalised Promotional Products

10%Discount
for A.P.C.S. Members
Simply mention this advert when placing your order.
Offer does not apply to all products.

minuteman press epping
a 92 wedge street epping vic 3076
t 9401 1955 f 9401 1966
e epping@minutemanpress.com
w www.epping.minutemanpress.com

Notes from the desk of the Editor:

As mentioned in our last issue, ‘to split or not to split’ is sometimes the question! Such was the question with our lead article from John Fleming, the result of four years of research into the history of one of Melbourne’s leading suburban studios, Cyril Stevens. I felt it just had to be presented in its entirety.

At the end of this year, a special thank you should be extended to four members for the excellent work they have been doing on behalf of all of us. **Leigh Harris** with his organisation of our highly successful markets, **Andrew Korlaki** for the excellent product photography for our auction catalogues, **John Millar** for his catering at our meetings and the packing and posting of Back Focus and last but not least, **Max Amos**, our brilliant auctioneer. Only those who do it know the amount of work involved. My thanks also, as Ed, to those who have contributed throughout the year with articles for our journal.



In closing for this year, from your committee to all our members, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hopefully 2018 will bring you the treasure you’ve always sought!

Ian Carron. Ed.

Index to this issue:

Cyril Stevens.	3	Unlisted Ones.	14	Mimosa II.	16	Vale: John O. Friend.	17
Stereo cameras USA	18	It was 1959.	21	Paton Elec.	22	‘I got a NOOKY.’	23

SPOTLIGHT ON CYRIL STEVENS

John Fleming

Born in Preston, Victoria, on October 11 1897, Cyril Edgar Alfred Stevens was the youngest son in a family of 10 children. His father, Samuel Stevens, was a printer and type setter, well known and respected in the industry and, later on, secretary of the Printing Trade Union. Prior to Cyril's birth, Samuel had been editor of a country newspaper, the 'Donald Times'. Upon return to Melbourne, he finally settled into a house in what was then a fairly isolated unmade road, Woolhouse Street, Northcote. This home they consequently called 'Lone Pine' in honour of Cyril's older brother Alexander who fought in Gallipoli. **Pic. 1.**



Pic 1. Taken around 1915, Cyril's father Samuel T. Stevens (standing centre) and mother Elizabeth (seated, front right) with Cyril's builder/carpenter brothers Leslie & Clyde, back row.

When the First World War began, Samuel Stevens had returned to working at the Melbourne 'AGE' newspaper as a praised and valued typesetter and young Cyril, now 16, joined his brothers in their carpentry and building business.



Pic 2. Cyril's woodworking skills evident in fret sawed & hand carved frame of his brother Alexander, a WWI casualty.



Pic 3. Creative composition, perhaps double printing, shows Cyril's teenage photo skills.

Always technically inclined, he was also very skilled with tools, although it was apparent that his first love was the then fast progressing and exciting field of photography. **Pic's 2 & 3.** His interest in this was sparked by two friends of his father in the printing trade-George Dehn and William Frederick Belcher. Both worked in separate firms located in Collingwood- Belcher at G. N. Raymond, where years later (1948) the 'Dalka' camera cartons were made! More importantly though, both Dehn and Belcher were very active members of the Melbourne Camera Club. The two older men became Cyril's mentors and also great friends.

They invariably were seen together and also participated in considerable competition, very often Cyril taking out many Club awards.

The magic of creating an image and storing it permanently impressed Cyril greatly and he decided, eventually, this must become his profession. By day he continued with his carpentry, by night and in spare time it was nothing but photography, his enthusiasm fuelling marathon sessions in the improvised darkroom he'd set up at Woolhouse Street. During WW1, Cyril took many portraits of young soldiers about to embark and of the lucky few who returned. Of course, many a family wanted photos of themselves to send overseas, and there were always baby photos and a few weddings. There was commercial work too, the potential seemed endless. **Pic 4.** Some scenic views taken whilst on Melbourne Camera Club excursions and which he had sent to several newspapers, were all published and very quickly Cyril realised he had a full time photographic business. The census records show that his profession of 'carpenter' in 1922 had by 1926 become 'photographer'!



Pic 4. Early commercial work: lunchtime at Triaca & Picchis, Fitzroy factory 1927. Photo: Courtesy Italian Historical Society.

By about 1928 Cyril's photographic enterprise demanded larger premises, and he moved from home to a double storey shop at 758 High Street, Thornbury diagonally opposite the almost brand-new Hoyts 'Regent' cinema. And it was only a few streets away from Will (as he was generally known)

Belcher and George Dehn, the other members of 'The Thornbury Trio'. **Pic 5.** Using his carpentry skills, Cyril busied himself creating artistic studio props and furniture, painted backdrops and stairways for his portraits and groups. He had a lively imagination and a creative energy that always placed him in an extraordinary category. **Pic 6.** June Turnbull (nee Stevens-Cyril's daughter) maintains "It's a great credit that my father, coming from a large family which was far from wealthy, never allowed limited financial means curb his total enthusiasm and positivity at all times, even in the depths of adversity which came later, during the Great Depression."



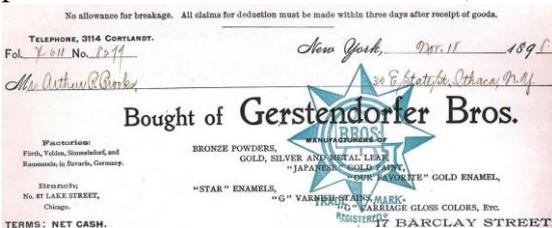
Pic 5. George Dehn, Melbourne Camera Club mentor to Cyril Stevens. Photo: John Gibson.



Pic 6. Imaginative backdrops for the Brady-Lawry wedding group at Thornbury.

It was just this spirit that enabled Stevens to continue business during those bleak times, using his considerable skills and the solid grounding gained early on from his two mentors, Belcher and Dehn. These two men, and the younger Stevens, swapped committee positions on the Melbourne Camera Club and, several years earlier when he was just 26, Cyril demonstrated to a packed meeting during September 1924 his version of the unusual and difficult Orotone

process. This he called a 'Sun-Gold', and in his talk to the camera club he told how a low fog positive plate was required, the negative must be reversed in the enlarger for correct orientation of the finished positive and, of great importance explained Stevens, was to use the very best gold enamel for backing, his choice being the German "Our Favourite" brand. **Pic 7.** Cyril showed some of his first efforts making these difficult,

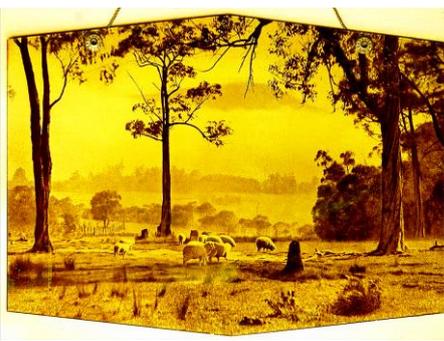


Pic 7. The source of Cyril's 'Our Favourite' gold enamel for making the 'Sun-Golds'.

gold backed prints on glass, one being a portrait of the Dehn family, George and Mathilde and little daughter Hilda. **Pic 8.** Also shown were some views of the Buchan Caves in Eastern Victoria and a glorious pastoral

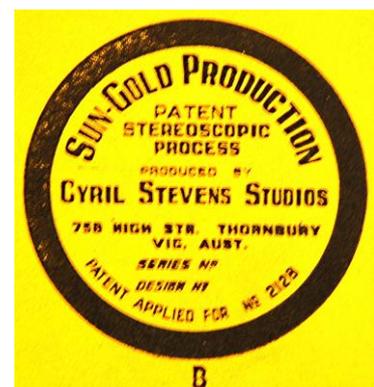


Pic 8. Cyril Stevens experimental 'Sun-Gold' featured the Dehn family: George & Mathilde with daughter Hilda. Photo: Courtesy Melbourne Camera Club.



Pic 9. Absolutely beautiful Stevens 'Sun-Gold'. These produced in quantity during the 1930s. Photo: Courtesy Melbourne Camera Club.

scene which was from a pictorial negative made several years prior. This later was printed in the dozens during the early 1930s and sold by a travelling salesman on a commission basis. Even today, they are very impressive to view and the Melbourne Camera Club has two in their permanent collection. **Pic's 9 & 10.**



Pic 10. Transfer decal on 'Sun-Gold' pastoral scene. 'Patent Applied for No. 2123'

Around the time Cyril was thinking of becoming a full time professional photographer, he still had time at weekends to undertake photographic excursions with his camera club colleagues Will Belcher

and George Dehn. The beautiful scenery around Kinglake and through to Marysville impressed them greatly whilst travelling- this being accomplished in some style using Cyril's new Essex roadster. **Pic 11.** For some time he had also been increasingly attracted to Will Belcher's lovely daughter, eventuating in Cyril marrying Hilda Belcher in June 1928, and settling into a house in Oakhill Avenue, Preston not far from the new studio in Thornbury. Marriage and the studio business meant camera club activities would soon have to be curtailed, as enjoyable as the country field trips could be. One such outing, to the



Pic 11. Cyril (left) and George Dehn on a photographic excursion at Kinglake, with the 1928 Essex roadster. Photo almost certainly taken by Hilda Stevens who rode in the rumble seat that day.



Pic 12. Magnificent group taken by Cyril Stevens, showing George Dehn (reclining front left) and Fred Belcher (balding, right rear) and Hilda Stevens (front centre with black Border Collie pup).

Frederick Belcher and Cyril Alfred Stevens as proprietors in 1933. Weekends were often now spent with friends and relatives nearby, and in his usual way Cyril recorded one such gathering on self timer so he could also be in the picture. **Pic 14.**

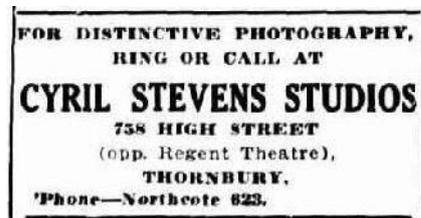


Pic 14. Candid group (on self-timer?) with Hilda & Cyril seated, Hilda and Mathilde Dehn and William Belcher, seated, right.

within the Melbourne Camera Club, and as 1935 approached they decided to form the Victorian Amateur Cine Society-V.A.C.S. This became a training ground for many a fine cameraman and film maker as the years progressed. **Pic 15.**

Right through the 1930s Cyril continued to make, in small batches, his 'Sun-Gold' pictures as supplement to the studio income. These sold direct from the studio or around the country, using a commission based travelling salesman having them as one of his lines. The late Ken

Macedon area in March 1930, was recorded for posterity in a magnificent group photo **Pic 12.** but the increasingly busy studio at 758 High Street meant buckling down to long hours. Already very well-known and a respected member of the fledgling Professional Photographers' Association, he nevertheless advertised far and wide to keep trade rolling. **Pic 13.** The Great Depression hit Cyril and Hilda hard, and they were forced to relinquish their house and move into the upstairs dwelling at the studio. The business was also registered as a company, with father-in-law William



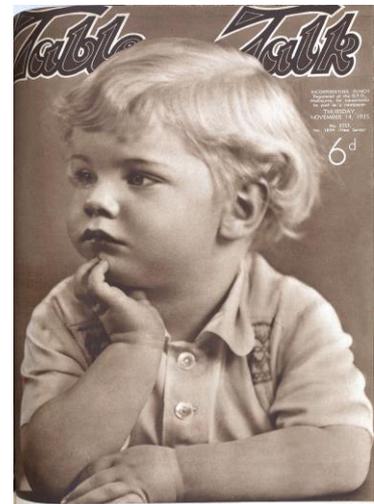
Pic 13. The new studio opens in High Street, Thornbury-1927.

Toward 1934 the fascination of making cine films had captured his imagination and after a short while very professional looking short films were being made, using an excellent Bell & Howell 16mm camera he had procured. It soon became apparent there were others with the same interest, some



Pic 15. Cyril Stevens proudly shows his new triple turret Bell & Howell 16 mm camera.

Turnbull said he used to often see an old ‘Sun-Gold’ hanging in a Northern suburbs home right into the 1960s when he was covering weddings with the studio! The main income now though was the very busy studio work, and this was helped no end by excellent publicity in the best places, including being published on the society paper ‘Table Talk’ front covers. **Pic 16.** A flood of bookings always resulted, one such being little Miss Kathleen Mulcair whose mother no doubt cherished the beautiful hand coloured portrait done by the Stevens Studio. In the early 1950s this lass entered the Miss Australia



Pic 16. Prestige! 1935 front cover of the society magazine ‘Table Talk’.



Pic 17. Beautifully hand coloured portrait in 1936 of Kathleen Mulcair, later a Miss Australia entrant.

Quest. **Pic 17.**

Meanwhile, Cyril had mastered his cine film making and editing and was heavily involved in the V.A.C.S with movie making. He’d also begun to try and capture on moving film the native bird life that abounded (and mostly still does) in the near rural districts of Melbourne. Quite probably his enthusiasm for moving films was fanned by spending spare time just across the road from his studio at the grand Hoyts ‘Regent’ cinema. Nearly every Australian suburb had a local picture theatre then, before the advent of television, and ‘going to the movies’ was a treat and a special outing for the family. Little could he have known that in a few years time Hollywood might knock on HIS door!



Pic 18. Hoyts ‘Regent’ cinema, diagonally opposite the Cyril Stevens Studio, Thornbury.

Pic 18. Another reason

though to stay close to home was the happy arrival a few years earlier of the Stevens’ first child, a son, Alan. **Pic 19.** Visits to the Melbourne Camera Club were quite rare by now, and most of his time was either working at the studio, or involved in cine photography which had become a great passion. He had managed to obtain some outstanding footage of the elusive Lyre-bird, but was frustrated the black and white film didn’t show the exquisite colours. Then Kodachrome became available as movie stock, with processing at Kodak’s Abbotsford, Melbourne factory, and he was able to closely repeat the shots. There was still something missing...sound. Yes, this is what made up a lot of the professional theatre experience, seeing AND hearing the subject...he had to find a way! Professionals working in 35mm had used film to record with a variable light beam, an optical sound track on a separate sound device and that film track could then be synchronised and printed with the original camera film. This could be done whilst shooting (lip synch) or post filming (wild sound, sound effects) but all that was out of reach of an amateur working on 16mm then. Cyril hit upon a partial solution, having read about the invention of small portable sound recorders which cut an acetate gramophone disc. Already popular in the USA, they had started to be used by Australian radio stations. One was procured at considerable expense and first tests were very encouraging...with this Cyril Stevens first began adding acceptable (not lip synch) sound to his already fine cine films, and of course, optical sound tracks had been possible on 16mm gauge for



Pic 19. Candid study of young Alan Stevens, around 1936-37.

several years. The disc cutter also led to another of his innovations, offering a message record of a portrait sitter's voice as a 'package' they could send to loved ones, or overseas. He christened this idea "Talking Pictures". **Pic 20.**

The studio continued into the late 1930s to become one of THE major ones outside of the city area. Every Monday the big newspapers were filled with the weekend wedding photos or some society portrait or such, credits by Athol Shmith, Spencer Shier, or Dickinson-Monteath and more oft than not Cyril Stevens Studios. If you wanted a fine, distinguished portrait, and if it wasn't Collins Street, then the choice was usually Allan Studios in Collingwood or Cyril Stevens of Thornbury. Perhaps this is what my father had in mind when he visited 758 High Street, Thornbury in June 1937 to have a portrait done on occasion of his 21st birthday? **Pic 21.** This framed sepia photograph was in our house for as long as I can remember, so the studio name and address has been familiar to me for almost 70 years, even before I started in professional photography around 1960. There was also a second studio operating during the latter half of the 1930s, about 1 mile up the road in High Street Preston, near the Town Hall. A receptionist was on duty, and whenever a sitting or assignment was required, Cyril could easily drive there in 5 minutes from the main studio at 758 High St, Thornbury. How he managed then to cram the studio work, cine film making and raising TWO children (a daughter, June, was born in 1936) and everything else into each day is amazing. No doubt booming business meant he could afford a nice car, and the immediate pre-war model was a Pontiac. Ever resourceful, he apparently would sometimes, for an extra fee, hire his grand black Pontiac as a wedding car! **Pic 22.**

It's caught on —
The New Gift Idea !
TALKING PICTURES !

• Cyril Stevens Studios are working day and night to keep up with the demand for Talking Pictures, the new gift idea. You know what Talking Pictures are? A Portrait and your voice. Just think what this means to friends far overseas, interstate, anywhere—the thrill of your voice again, a Portrait and a Record. A Talking Picture.

• No wonder Talking Pictures have caught on, it's your chance. Hear them! Have a Talking Picture made, only 15/6 complete in carton, ready for mailing. Exclusive to this Studio. Call or Phone JW 1623.

Cyril Stevens Studios Pty. Ltd.
 758 High St., Thornbury. 358 High St., Preston

Pic 20. Always innovative, during 1938, Cyril devised more uses for his new acetate disc recorder!



Pic 21. Thomas Cormick Fleming, aged 21, photographed at the Thornbury studio in 1937. Embossed 'Cyril Stevens Studios' is on bottom right of print.



Pic 22. Purchase of an impressive Pontiac sometimes saw it used as the wedding car!

By late 1938, with the business now very well established and successful, his cine film making now also quite professional and starting to win overseas awards, yet another photographic possibility intrigued him—direct natural colour prints. He'd been aware of the dye transfer process for some time and had read of the stunning quality available with the British 'Vivex' process, using a one-shot, three colour separation negative camera. The only such



Pic 23. A Jos-Pe 'one-shot' colour separation negative camera of the type owned by William Thomas Owen, MCC friend of Cyril Stevens.

camera he knew of around Melbourne belonged to a fellow Melbourne Camera Club member, William Owen. It was a German Jos-Pe and Owen had obtained this way back in 1930 whilst still working with Spencer Shier, and had in fact made colour prints around that time. This type of camera was very rare in Australia, not only as they were exceedingly expensive and rather delicate, the actual dye transfer colour printing was very tedious and required immense skill. A good darkroom worker could produce one, at best two, prints per day if all went well! In England however, Dr. D. A. Spencer had set up a specialised printing laboratory with dozens and dozens of trained operators producing 'Vivex' prints. All the professional photographer had to achieve was make good colour separation negatives, most usually by then with a one-shot beam splitting style camera like the Jos-Pe. **Pic 23.**

One day toward the end of 1938 or early 1939, Cyril came back to the studio with a strange new camera and called to Hilda to organise young June for a photograph whilst the sun was still shining brightly. June clearly recalls "...Dad, quite excited-Mum had to call me in from the back yard, mud pies and so on-clean me up quickly, put on my best dress, and I was taken downstairs into the back yard and posed alongside a beautiful bright pink Azalea in a pot, a rose in my hand. Dad took the photo, in beautiful NATURAL colour. I was tiny, about 4, and oblivious to what was going on but why didn't Dad use this process commercially-was it the war? This is the most natural, lovely colour-still looks fresh today" **Pic 24.**



Pic 24. Stunningly beautiful 1939 dye transfer direct natural colour print. A very significant Australian historical photograph.



Pic 25. An alternate take of June Stevens which Cyril had commercially printed as advertising folders for his intended natural colour portraiture.

It was almost certainly hostilities that ensured the new venture would never continue, and in England 'Vivex' closed their lab forever, as the workforce joined the Army, Navy or Air Force. There is real proof though Cyril Stevens Studios intended to offer natural colour portraiture as yet another innovative service because a number of advertising folders exist, printed in colour and with the wording 'June Stevens-A Natural Color (US style spelling!) Study.'

In the bottom right corner, the wording is 'By...Cyril Stevens Studios Thornbury and Preston'. **Pic 25.** The photograph appears similar to the first test, was either shot on same day, or a day or two later perhaps to obtain slightly softer lighting. There is though only the ONE existing, absolutely superb, tri-colour dye transfer print. During the war years there was always plenty of work, often

hampered by the usual material shortages. Hundreds of local service personnel had portraits done at the Stevens Studios during the mid-1940s. **Pic 26.**

During the wartime Cyril also started showing 16mm sound films in local halls as welcome distraction for the folk at home, and for entertaining troops here on leave plus American visiting forces. The projector was a powerful and heavy Bell & Howell 'Stadium' model with a 1000-watt bulb, the next brightest being arc models. Often a screening would have some of his sound shorts or small documentaries. How he found time we don't know, but he added to his formidable list of achievements 'The travelling picture show man'! These screenings



Pic 26. War time created much studio work with portraits & family groups. Photo: By Cyril Stevens, Courtesy Australian War Memorial.

GRAND PICTURE NIGHT
 (TALKIES)
 Presented by
CYRIL STEVENS STUDIOS
 including that unique picture:
"THE FEATHERED DANCER"
 In which the Lyre Bird is seen and heard performing its famous dance and imitating other birds. This picture is in natural color, and took three years to produce.

Excellent supporting programme of Color Pictures, Comedies, Cartoons, etc.

ST. SILAS' HALL
 (Opposite Albert Park Station).
MONDAY, 20th OCT., at 8 p.m.
ADULTS, 1/-. **CHILDREN 6d.**

Pic 27. The travelling picture show man, 1947.

continued for several years after the war as family entertainment whilst people started to rebuild their lives in peacetime. **Pic 27.** Despite all these demands on his time, Cyril wrote, produced and filmed a charming little short film entitled 'Calling Frisco', starring his now 11-year-old June and her little dog 'Toby'. Most of this was shot at weekends and evenings, using improvised sets, lighting and rigging. A wonderful little black & white photograph (perhaps taken by a teenage Alan Stevens) shows the set taking over the front room of the dwelling, June reading a letter whilst the little terrier 'Toby' snoozes under the closely packed 500-watt opal floodlights and Cyril perches precariously with his

Better mastering lathes were procured locally also, and he was in business...but what to call the new business? By now young Alan Stevens had become very proficient in electronics and sound recording, somewhat eclipsing his father so the family sat around the dining table one evening and all suggested names for the recording side of their enterprise. Cyril had tentatively been using the name 'Zenith Recording', but someone mentioned a spotlight and suddenly they realised...that was it: 'SPOTLIGHT'! The very first commercial releases were cut on 78, but this was almost history by 1951, they had to be first in Australia to produce the new microgroove, long playing vinyl records. By now an electronics genius beyond his age, Alan had modified the locally made mastering lathe



Pic 33. Orchestra leader William Flynn, left, joined 'Spotlight' as music director.

to cut microgroove and they made their own masters at Thornbury from the tapes. Outside of the ABC national broadcasting network and one or two big commercial concerns, they had the best and most up to date gear at the time and do lay claim to producing the first Australian made LP microgroove recordings. To manage and help produce the increasing talent heading to record at Thornbury, 'Spotlight' engaged the services of orchestra leader and musician William Flynn. **Pic 33.** Before television began in Australia in 1956, radio and record players were the main home entertainment and records such as Lou Toppano, piano accordion and his band on Spotlight Varieties 10-inch Microgroove ('Dancing Rhythm' advised on this cover!) sold well. **Pic 34.**



Pic 34. Cover of 10-inch LP record in 1953 featured Lou Toppano, piano accordion, and his band.



Pic 35. Cyril and Alan Stevens recording a concert at the Melbourne Town Hall, 1952 with the new 'Magnecorders'. Note Alan's home designed mixing console and the period headphones.

The two Magnecoders were beautifully portable, packing into two manageable cases each machine and were taken on location often. The grand Melbourne Town Hall often staged concerts, jazz sessions and sometimes recitals featuring the mighty Wurlitzer organ. A number of LP's were recorded there over some years, and one



Pic 36. Newspaper features during 1954 cemented the success of 'Spotlight' studios.

photo taken around 1953 shows young Alan, barely 21, riding the level of his home constructed mixer and feeding the two-full track mono 'Magnecorders'. Those headphones would be Army Surplus, but that's about all there was in those days! **Pic 35.** The final success of 'Spotlight' came when a number of newspapers started to feature articles about this truly unique Australian suburban recording studio/record production facility. Not perhaps well known is Cyril also secured the contract to do many of the cinema audio advertising discs that were played before the curtain went up and during intermission, with accompanying slides.

These usually advertised local businesses around the various cinema locations (and there were many) whilst the voice-overs were cut at 'Spotlight' by well known radio identities of the day including Hal Todd who was a regular Thornbury visitor. **Pic 36.** Another triumph was the acquisition of one of the first two variable pitch German 'Neumann' mastering lathes to be imported to Australia...the other one going to the national broadcast network, the ABC.

By about 1954-55, Cyril had almost totally concentrated on the recording and record production side of their family concern whilst Ken Turnbull ran much of the photographic studio as well as June now working full time there too, having learnt to use the trundling old pedestal studio camera. It certainly was a family affair, and more so after 1956 when June and Ken married. They had first met at a local dance, although June had seen him selling sweets and ice-cream years ago at the 'Regent' cinema! Ken was by now also doing studio photography and weddings. What a hive of activity those two shops must have been then! And there was no stopping the 'Spotlight' output, their works appearing under licence as far away as Canada. **Pic 37.** All was not fine sailing though, as on September 13th 1955 Alan's car was smashed into by a fruiterer's truck that failed to give right of way at an intersection. Alan was seriously injured, and lay in a coma for weeks in hospital. He slowly recovered, but his right arm was now almost totally useless. He had to retrain himself to get by using just his left hand...a massive handicap in his field of endeavour



Pic 37. By 1957 'Spotlight' were being syndicated, this is a Canadian 'Carnaval' LP organ music at the Melbourne Town Hall.



Pic 38. Barry Crocker & Dave Clark first recording late 1959. June Turnbull's studio photos for the 45 EP cover.

By around 1959 Rock n' Roll was very well established and one day a brash tall young lad visited 'Spotlight' in the hope Cyril Stevens might take a chance with him and record a few tracks. The chap said he was half of a duo that were doing well and popular at dances, their records would sell. Cyril was rather conservative musically, preferring the classics and light music, and wasn't too interested. The interview was almost over when June caught sight of the tall young man whom she recognised from TV appearances. It was Barry Crocker! She convinced her father he WAS good and becoming VERY popular, and please take him on. This they did, Alan recording 8 songs to make two EP 45's, recording the Crocker & Clark duo and assembled session musicians on a newly acquired twin track machine...but still in mono. June arranged and shot the record picture covers in the photo studio next door. You can hear these on 'You Tube'. **Pic 38.** A fine actor, Barry a few years later starred in the outrageously funny Australian film 'The Adventures of Barry Mc Kenzie'.



Pic 40. June & Ken Turnbull, early 1970s in Bali-a place they fell in love with.

In the early 1970s Ken and June Turnbull **Pic 39.** were able to have the first of many enjoyable holidays in Bali, usually during the Australian post Christmas break or at other studio quiet times. Not a long flight from Australia, it was an idyllic place they both loved, and made many lifelong friends there. **Pic 40.** Around this time Ken was also doing many candid weddings,



Pic 39. June Turnbull, assisted by husband Ken, took over the photographic studio division from the mid-1950s.

shooting with a Voigtländer Bessamatic, a camera which Cyril had settled on soon after they were released in 1959. Advantages for a 35mm camera were the almost unique between-the-lens leaf shutter which allowed this fine SLR to synchronise flash at all speeds-essential for a professional user. Really good optics was another plus... An unusual camera perhaps to be used in a pro studio, but how many other 35s with single lens viewing had these advantages then? It was with a Bessamatic Ken and June shot many of the picture covers for a 12-inch LP 'Spotlight' record sleeve, a good example being the Kodachrome done featuring Arlene Andrewartha (model of the year 1959) wearing one of Ken's colourful Hawaiian shirts. **Pic 41.** The photographic studio now

though was winding down, times (and the surrounding suburbs) were changing rapidly. Like movie theatres, there were photo studios in every Australian suburb once, serving local communities at a time when few people had any sort of camera and the idea of digital instant imaging wasn't even a dream. Some idea of how it was can be gleaned from the later studio letterhead, circa 1961. The emphasis is on the growing sound and TV film (advertising films) market, videotape for TV stations was still in the development stages. **Pic 42.** With a long career already behind him, still Cyril Stevens planned ahead, spurred on by the success of local TV production firms like Crawford Productions. There was also the new excitement of producing stereophonic recordings and having stereo records pressed...this at the time was big business as everyone traded up to two channel sound for the home. He and Alan



Pic 42. By 1960 the emphasis was heavily on the sound recording and Cyril had started to consider TV film production.

'Spotlight' kept growing...so much so that Ken Turnbull, when he wasn't shooting candid weddings, acted as travelling sales representative for 'Spotlight'. Disaster was just around the corner though.

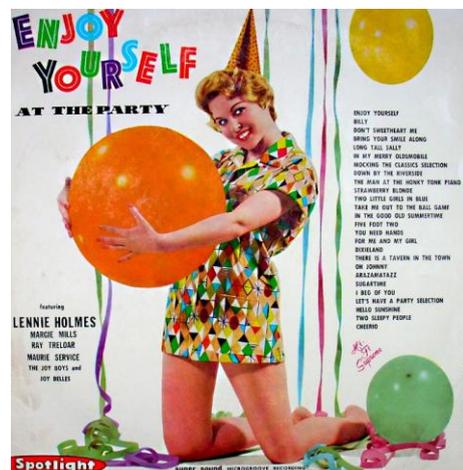
One evening near dusk in 1963, Alan was walking to the local confectionary shop to buy some sweets for his young daughter; half way there he was hit by a car whilst crossing the road and died at the scene. This was a horrendous shock to a close-knit family, and Cyril in particular could hardly contain his grief. He managed to struggle on for another 2 or 3 years, but it was never the same, and uncharacteristically, he seemed to have lost much of his energy. The



Pic 44. The former Cyril Stevens Studios in High Street Thornbury, as seen in 2016. Photo studio was at right. Recording studio was in the left building.

purchase two high quality microphones to match my 'Ferrograph' stereo tape machine.

Arriving at the shop **Pic 44.** I met the name long seen on my father's portrait, Cyril Stevens. His face lit up when I mentioned also being in professional photography. To a young chap in his early 20s (as I was then) Cyril seemed to be timeless...he had been a photographer before my father was born...and I gained the impression of a tinge of resignation and sadness all this beautiful equipment was being sold. Of course, I had no idea at the time of the circumstances, but did notice a grey 'Ferrograph' similar to my machine and commented on that as I inspected the unusual higher speed



Pic 41. Record cover around 1960, photograph in the studio by Ken & June Turnbull using Kodachrome in the Voigtlander Bessamatic. The model was Arlene Andrewartha, wearing one of Ken's Hawaiian shirts!

upgrade by brilliantly adapting it, using parts from another 'Ferrograph' machine, to run at the professional speed of 15 inches per second. **Pic 43.** The photo studio struggled on, but next door



Pic 43. 'Ferrograph' twin track stereo recorder, upgraded by Alan Stevens to 15 IPS, and used at 'Spotlight'. Rediscovered in 1984, owned by the author & still fully operational.

decision was made to wind up the recording business and dispose of all the equipment, whilst trying to perhaps sell the remaining photographic studio as a going concern. This proved almost impossible at the time, studio portraiture had just about gone out of fashion and everyone had a camera, which even decimated a lot of wedding photography and family photos. Noting the recording studio equipment for sale advertisement in the newspaper, the author drove out to High Street Thornbury one day (I think around 1967) to see if it were possible to

modification. An offer was placed on two ‘mikes’ and, before departing Cyril said to me “Have a listen to this” and played a minute or so of Bach choral music he’d recently recorded...in a quiet passage of which there was the slightest “click” on the master tape. “None of us can fathom what caused it, a total mystery....” With that we shook hands and I drove the long way back to the studio I worked with then in Ashburton. It was my only meeting with the legendary, remarkable Cyril Stevens. A proposed move to sunny Queensland meant ‘The Thornbury Trio’ who had taken to winning innumerable camera club trophies had come to an end. **Pic 45.**



Pic 45. Silver bowl trophy awarded by Melbourne Camera Club to George & Mathilde Dehn, 17th June 1920. Photo: John Gibson.

More than likely my youthful offer for the microphones was surpassed by others, including John Farrar of ‘The Strangers’ pop group known to always want the best sound and microphones. John married singer Pat Carrol and they now live in the USA where he is a successful producer. June and Ken Turnbull continued the photographic studio, Ken hardly able to keep up with the candid wedding bookings now being shot on 35 mm colour negative with the



Pics 46 & 47 (below). Photographic excursion, Arthurs Creek & Marysville, Boxing Day 1930.

Bessamatics. Despite that, it had become increasingly difficult to make a comfortable living and they regretfully accepted an offer to sell the studio name and business, and the comprehensive negative archive. The young and totally inept ‘photographer’ managed within six months to run the business into insolvency. Worse was to follow-the Turnbull’s discovered this fool had consigned all of the studio negatives, triacetate & glass plates, to the local tip! Over 50 years of creativity, endeavour and social history obliterated. **Pics 46 & 47.** A few images remain as positive prints.



Pic 47. Steavensons Falls.



Pic 48. Cyril would have loved digital colour!

As soon as the business affairs were settled, Cyril retired to live in Cairns, Queensland thus ending a long and remarkably varied career. Had he been born a generation or two later, I am fairly certain digital technology would have absorbed him totally and one can only wonder what the outcome would have been had he tried one-shot tri-colour dye transfer in the late 1920s. Alan Elliott, OAM, senior member of the Melbourne Camera Club and their archivist/historian, summed it up

perfectly: “Cyril Stevens was always at the very cutting edge of technology”. **(Pic 48.)**

The Unlisted Ones!

Roger Burrows

We all know and revere McKeowns and it is probably the most used or consulted book in our houses. However, it is the stuff of nightmares. I kid you not! In the prologue to their last edition they tell us that there are 40,000 cameras listed and 30,000 they didn't list for a variety of reasons, including those that were too new at the time of printing and possibly not worth collecting in the first place.



Pic. 1. Bunnykins.



Pic. 2. Boots Disc camera.

Now for a little mathematics. If we decided to dedicate our lives to collecting one camera per day, that is to say 365 per year with time off for good behaviour, = 1095 every 3 years. That means 111 years to collect the contents of McKeowns' 12th edition and if we add the 30,000 not listed, that's another 83 years! I don't think you folk are really trying. Now I have been out there doing my bit to whittle down the unlisted 30,000 and the first is a Bunnykins promotional camera for Royal Doulton from around 2005. (Pic. 1.) As you

can see from the photo: unused. Here was a camera loaded with film and built in electronic flash and just given away.

The next camera is branded Boots. Boots is a chain of chemist shops throughout the UK and was big enough to have a range of cheaper cameras made with their name on them. As you can see it is a Boots Disc 415. (Pic. 2.) Nothing smart, but disc cameras have become very thin on the ground. The next camera (Pic. 3.) is a very happy little soul from the front and should have a wagging tail at the back, but it doesn't. It has a miniature screen, a viewfinder, and a USB socket. This one is definitely not even in the 30,000 list but is a bit of fun. (Pic. 4.)



Pic. 3. Dog Cam.



Pic. 4. Rear of Dog Cam.

The next cab off the rank is the Oxford Camera.

This one is not listed by McKeowns' but has come up on a couple of web sites with the usual query of who made it and when? I think I have tracked it down to the Standard Camera Company, a small factory that specialised in metal pressings and had, at times, stamped up parts for Coronet. A lot of

the parts are very similar to those of the British Coronet. There is a strong possibility that it may have been made as a premium camera and as such never retailed.

(Pic. 5.)

Lastly, and because I am a French camera enthusiast, one from France. This is also not listed in McKeown's but it is not too new, nor is it too cheap and plastic looking. It is an all metal TLR for 120 film. According to the best information I can find it was probably made around 1952. Some of the design features, such as gearing the focussing lens to the taking lens, take us back to the 1930s. The lenses are by SOM Berthiot of Paris and the shutter an Atos-2.

(Pic. 6.)



Pic. 6. Luxoflex.



Pic. 7. Photo-Plait name plate.



Pic. 5. The Oxford Camera.

On the back of the camera is a plate with 'Photo-Plait Paris' written on it but Photo-Plait was a retailer of cameras, not a manufacturer. It also has been suggested that it was made by the 'Association de Techniciens en Optique et Mécanique Scientifique' using the acronym 'ATOMS' which was formed in 1946 to make twin-lens reflex cameras as it bears many similarities. (Pic. 7.) So these are my contributions to the 30,000 unlisted cameras. **Where's yours?**



Kodak Girls

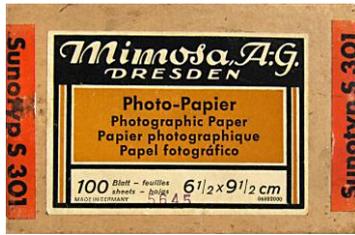
When looking through old magazines or books such as the BJA one can't but be impressed with the art work that

went into advertising lay outs. This was long before the days of computer generation of graphics and if you wanted a particular look to an advertisement and a particular colour scheme to prevail then you got a commercial artist who very quickly came up with

the goods. A great exponent of using colour and style and indeed maintaining the style for a long time was Kodak. Here are two examples of how the corporate image was projected using elegant and stylish young ladies with cameras. Kodak had understood very early that the bulk of pictures would be taken by young mothers of their families. As you can see one is from Australia and the other is from Sweden but the same image and style is projected.

The Mimosa II.

Stefan Sztromajer



Probably the present camera, the Mimosa, was introduced in 1948 in the Soviet Zone of occupied Germany. According to its name it was manufactured by the plant that was more famously known for producing photographic papers, films, and plates. In 1947 the plant had been ordered to make cameras. Their first product was Velax shutters.

Early in 1948 Robert Graichen elaborated a very interesting design. I do believe his main target was to create the simplest and most robust camera, made up of the fewest possible parts. Probably such an idea was caused by the general destruction of almost all of the Dresden plants, including Mimosa. So the number of more sophisticated machine tools that survive was limited. Because of the capability of the designer and the technicians' enthusiasm, the camera was introduced in last months of 1948. The first model, Mimosa I, was a box-shaped 35 mm viewfinder camera. As far as I know its production was very limited, so now that camera is rare. I could only find an advert of that model. (Fig. 1). The Mimosa II differs from the former, as its finder is built into the body instead of being a frame one (Fig. 2). The camera body, covered with black, grained leatherette is made of alloy diecast so it is really robust. (Figs 3 and 4.)



Fig. 1. The Mimosa I advert.



Fig. 2. Front view of Mimosa II.

The cameras were fitted with three kinds of triplet lenses: Victor, Meritar both made by E. Ludwig Dresden, and the blue coated Trioplan by Meyer Gortitz, the best one. The helical focussing mount allows setting from 0.8 m. to infinity. The Velax leaf shutter offers speeds of $1/10$, $1/25$, $1/50$, $1/100$, $1/200$ sec. and B.



Fig. 3. Top plate. Frame counter is between the film transport knobs. Shutter release at the right has a cable release thread.



Fig. 4. Camera back, viewfinder at top left.



Fig. 5. Bottom detail, showing tripod thread.



Fig. 6. Inside of camera after removing back plate. Pressure plate is in open position.

Film loading after replacing the back (Figs 5 and 6.) and opening the pressure plate (Fig. 7.) is quite easy.

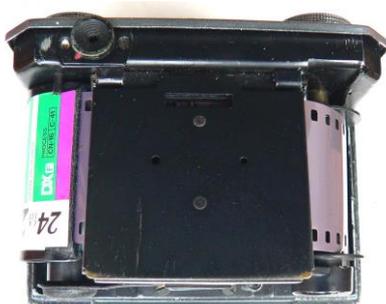


Fig. 7. As 6, but with pressure plate closed.



Fig. 8. The leather case.

Owing to its compact shape the camera is perfectly balanced, so there is no problem exposing without a tripod at $1/10$ sec. when needed.

The Mimosa was delivered with a genuine leather case (Fig. 8).

The dimensions of the camera were (in mm.) $75 \times 95 \times 72$, while its weight was 446 gm.

Mimosa production ceased in 1950, with the number of cameras manufactured being about 5000.

JOHN O. FRIEND 1920-2017

It was with great sadness that I heard after the recent photographic market of the passing of John Friend. A member of the APCS for over 25 years, John was a remarkable man who experienced much in his life, and through his ability to forgive people changed the way I think about and act towards people.

You see, apart from being a talented photographer (he earned his Master of Photography Certificate prior to World War 2), John, who was born in Transylvania in Western Romania in 1920, was also Jewish. He survived not only the horrors of the German concentration camps during WW2 (both his parents died in Auschwitz), but also further imprisonment by the Russian's after their defeat of the Germans.

John arrived in Australia in 1949 not speaking a word of English, yet within a few years he had managed to learn the language, had worked at Kodak (in the paper manufacturing plant), and had been employed at the Argus Newspaper in Melbourne where his knowledge was put to good use in producing color separation negatives to make the printing plates for the papers colour front pages (the Argus being the first newspaper in the world to regularly publish colour sports/news photos within hours of the event happening).



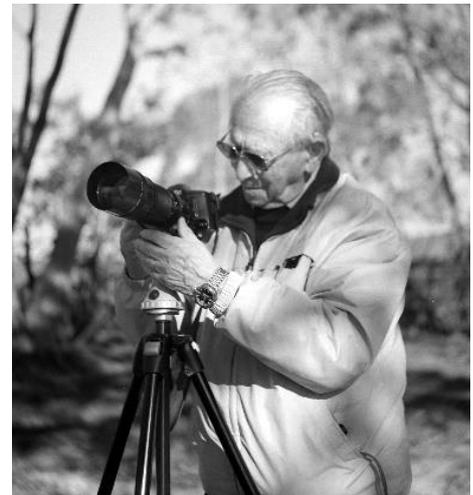
John left the Argus in 1956 to work at the ABC in their new Television section as a Senior Cameraman, beginning work before the studios had been built at Elsternwick. Because of his knowledge of photography, he was brought into the processing laboratory to help set up the film processing and transfer equipment prior to and during the Melbourne Olympics in 1956.

It was during this time he developed an interest in electronics, which helped him in his many years of working at the ABC in roles as diverse as audio engineering (he once told me how legendary guitarist Billy Thorpe not only blew up his microphones but also helped destroy his hearing – he only played one way – loud!!), and as a lighting director on Countdown (an

interesting position for someone with a love of classical music).

After retiring from the ABC in the early 1970s John and his wife bought a caravan and travelled around the country, which led to John teaching photography courses at TAFE's in various country towns and at Holmesglen TAFE in Melbourne. John held several exhibitions of his photography over the years. He loved landscape photography and exploring the colours of the Australian landscape. Also a talented printer, John printed many of his slides (shot mostly on Leica's or Rolleiflex 66) using the Cibachrome process.

I first met John at a Photographic Trade Show at 'Geoff's Shed' around 10 years ago. Our club had been given a stand and had set up an impressive camera display. I was working for the SanDisk distributors at the time, and snuck off the stand to have a look at the club's display. After chatting to a few people John approached me, and seeing my name on my pass asked what nationality it was? I replied my parents were Hungarian, to which he asked *in Hungarian* if I spoke Hungarian? We chatted (me with my bad Hungarian) for a few minutes, during which time he invited me to visit him the following week.



It was the start of a friendship that was to last until his death (although to my great shame I had not seen him much since he went into a nursing home). We would have a coffee (or glass of red) every few weeks, and would go out photographing. He taught me much about landscape photography (who knew a tele lens was as useful in the bush as it is on a racetrack?), and about photographing with compassion. I once asked him why he took the sort of photos he did, not photojournalism like he had in Hungary after the war? He said he had seen too much bad in the world, and he, along with the world, had changed, and he only wanted to record the good he saw around him. John was a good man, a good friend, and I am a much better person for having known him.

By **ANDREW KORLAKI**. If you are interested in knowing more about John he wrote his life story a few years ago. It can be downloaded as a PDF via <http://story-of-a-holocaust-survivor.com/>

Stereo Realist



Pic 1. Stereo Realist model 1041.

viewfinder lens is in the front between the taking lenses. (Pic. 2) It is a solid diecast metal camera weighing 822 grams and it proved to be a reliable user. With the revival of interest in stereo photography in the 1950s, it went on to become the best-selling stereo camera of all time.

The 5-perforation format of 23x24mm became known as the “Realist Format” and I wrote previously in *Back Focus* about two cameras that used that format – the Delta and the Videon. Here are a couple more that are less commonly seen.....

Realist 45

Introduced by Realist Inc. (a David White company) in 1955 it was priced at \$88.50, about half the price of the Stereo Realist, as it had simpler specifications. Kodak had marketed their Stereo Kodak late in 1954 and possibly the Realist 45 was offered as competition to the Kodak. The Realist 45 (Pic. 3) was actually made by Iloca in Hamburg, Germany. It was the same camera as their Iloca Stereo Rapid but minus the rangefinder and self-timer. As with the Stereo Realist and some other Iloca stereo models the viewfinder is located in the

The David White Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, introduced the Stereo Realist camera in 1947. They made two models that are identical except for the lenses. The first model (1041) has 3-element f3.5 lenses, the 1951 second model (1042) has 4-element f2.8 lenses. Early 3.5 Realists have Ilex Paragon lenses, made in Rochester NY. Early 2.8 Realists have Kodak Ektar lenses. Later 3.5s and 2.8s have David White lenses. (Pic. 1) The shutters have speeds of 1 second to 1/150th (1/200th with the 2.8 model) and there is a coupled rangefinder. The rangefinder windows are in the base of the camera as are the rear viewing windows, while the



Pic 2. Viewfinder lens in centre, rangefinder windows in base.



Pic 3. Realist 45.



Pic 4. Viewfinder location.

base of the camera. (Pic. 4) Designed as an easy-to-use camera and weighing 738 grams it is solid and well-made. Nicely finished with fine satin chrome, it has smart-looking brown covering and darker brown enamel trim. It also has several interesting design features.

A pair of 35mm f3.5 Steinheil Cassar S lenses in 4-speed Vero

shutters are fixed to the front panel. I use the word fixed because they do not move when focusing, that takes place internally. The moveable centre section with the film gates (**Pic. 5**) is linked to the focus wheel on the camera's top and it moves in or out to adjust focus at the film plane. (The Stereo Realist also has film plane focusing). The 10cm long pressure-plate attached to the back holds the film firmly in position. Notice there is a notch in the left side gate, this helps you to match the correct pairs on your film when cutting them for mounting.



Pic 5. Film plane and pressure plate.

A smaller red scale above the focus wheel shows the depth-of-field. Also situated on the top is a film reminder, an accessory shoe with flash contact and an exposure counter. The camera makes 15-16 stereo pairs on a 20-exposure film and 28-29 pairs on a 36-exposure film. The film transport is operated with a neat fold-out lever (**Pic. 6**) so, with a single stroke you can advance the film and cock the shutter. There is a shutter cocking lever on the front panel and it moves as you wind on. After an exposure, you can re-cock the shutter with this lever if you wish to double-expose a pair of frames. According to the instruction book it is possible to expose only one frame at a time by this procedure, having first covered one lens. They don't say why you would want to do this!



Pic 6. Film wind lever.

The camera's base (**Pic. 7**) has a rewind button and a dual-purpose rewind knob. You move a small notched lever and the knob will pop out for film rewinding. When the film is rewound you then pull the knob further out and turn it in the other direction. This unlocks the back - which is not hinged, so you have to be careful not to drop it! Printed on the base are helpful instructions for loading the film, removing the back and suggested focus settings. There are also two exposure guides: one for daylight exposure, one for flash exposure. They are for using 10 ASA film (1950s Kodachrome) and No. 5B flash bulbs.

and suggested focus settings. There are also two exposure guides: one for daylight exposure, one for flash exposure. They are for using 10 ASA film (1950s Kodachrome) and No. 5B flash bulbs.

Steré-All

Universal Camera Corporation in New York marketed this camera in 1954 at a time when they were struggling to stay in business. Founded in 1933 the company became insolvent in 1952, yet they managed to survive until 1964. Many of the cameras they made had a distinctive appearance,



Pic 7. Baseplate details.

two examples are the Mercury and the Univex. Also distinctively styled is the Steré-All. (Pic. 8) It was their only stereo camera and the last camera they made. It is not quite as heavy as the Realist 45 being constructed from moulded plastic and aluminium.

Here is a wonderful piece of sales copywriting about it, taken from the foreword in the instruction book:

“Three-dimensional photography is rapidly replacing the conventional flat photograph because conventional photography reproduces only a fraction of the exciting visual detail that the eye sees and wishes to record.

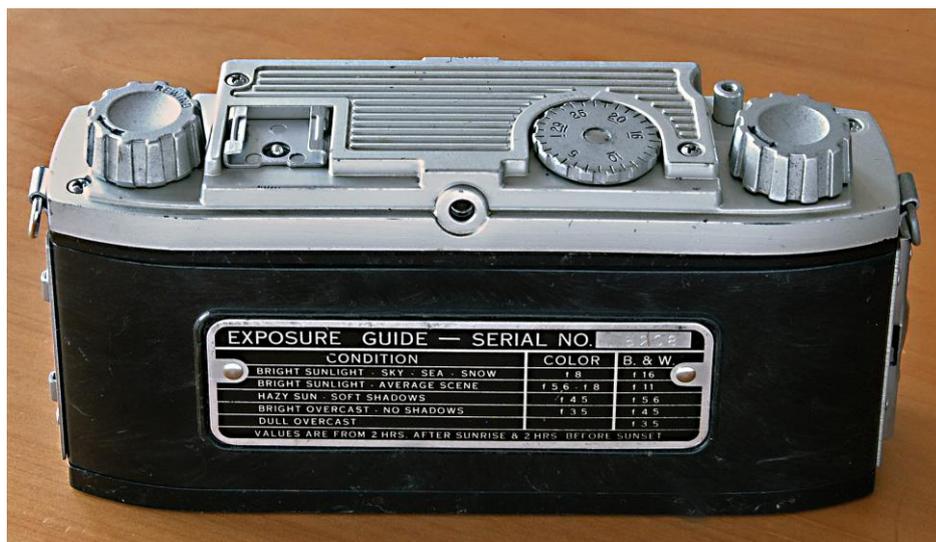
But 3D photography recreates life, for it makes possible photographs in natural color, natural size, and natural depth. Yet the stereo camera is as easy to operate as the ordinary box camera.

Steré-All, your new 35MM stereo camera, makes it possible for you to discover for yourself the excitement of 3D picture taking. Your pictures taken with the Steré-All Camera will live in all their exciting true-to-life detail through the magic realism of stereo photography. The scenic grandeurs that thrilled you during your summer trip will be yours to enjoy throughout the year as you and your friends see them, in their perfect clarity, with your Steré-All Viewer. Your child's smile will lose none

of its charm, but will be faithfully recorded forever, as real and as round as life, through Steré-All's 3D magic.”

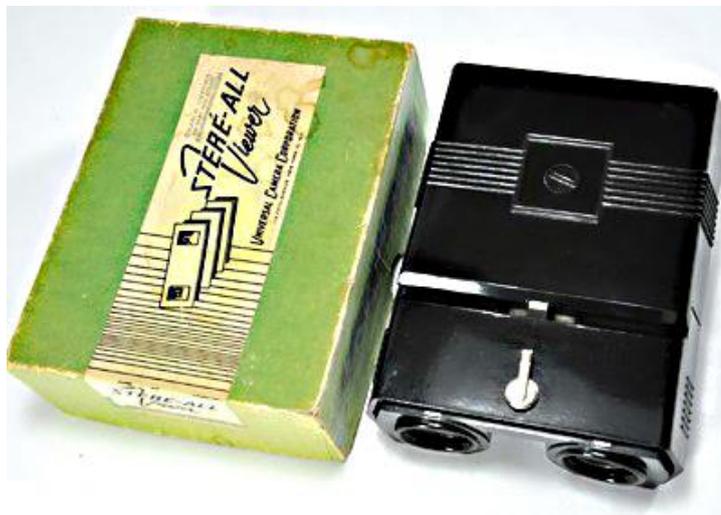


Pic 8. Steré-All.



Pic 9. Exposure guide.

to set - for exposure. That is on the front between the lenses and it sets the aperture from f3.5 to f16. Winding the film also cocks the shutter and double-exposures are not possible. The Steré-All makes 16 stereo pairs on a 20-exposure film and 29 on a 36-exposure film. A handy chart on the camera back (Pic. 9) shows the exposure settings for Color and B&W. It also shows the depth-of-field for each aperture. A bulb flash unit was available that fitted into the flash shoe. Universal also offered a neat illuminated stereo viewer for \$12.50 that lit up when a slide was inserted. Pic 10.



Pic 10. The Universal Steré-All Viewer.

It was 1959....

John Fleming

One of the more memorable Australian photographic advertisements appeared briefly around June 1959, featuring Sabrina promoting Bell & Howell slide projectors. To my knowledge (I was 14 at the time and took special notice!) the full page ads appeared only in the June 1959 Australian publication 'Photo Digest' and, with a colour wash, in June 'Popular Photography', Australian edition. A beautifully restored scan of the rare colour-wash version appears in this 'Back Focus'.

Sabrina was a British starlet with what can only be described as an 'amazing figure' and had capitalized on this. During late 1958/early 1959 she toured Australia with a variety show in which she starred (see Back Focus issue No. 100) and was hugely popular, drawing instant crowds everywhere. During that Australian tour, Sabrina endorsed a number of products, including filming a black and white Caltex Oil TV commercial (see it on YouTube) and stills for Sixteen Millimetre Australia, Bell & Howell projectors. Few though would know the real story behind the final advertising photograph.



IN SYDNEY: The glamorous Sabrina lent her presence to Bernie Silver for this special picture celebrating the opening of his new shop at 129 King Street (though she was unable to sip champagne in person on opening day with the visitors). Between them is a Bell & Howell "Headliner" Semimatic projector, and Sixteen Millimetre Aust. is now also circulating shop display material portraying Sabrina with other Bell & Howell products. Bernie Silver is also planning a photographic social club in the same building — those interested are asked to contact him.

Pic 1. Before & After.... airbrushing... before Photo Shop!



Like most, I always thought this product-advertising photograph was a studio shot—not so! A few months ago I came across the last three 'Popular Photography' (Australian edition) magazines in mint condition required to complete my historic archived set going back to 1951. In one of the long missing magazines the entire tale surrounding this advertisement is uncovered. Sixteen Millimetre Australia, the local B&H distributors, had arranged for Sabrina to attend just prior to the public at the opening of Sydney camera retailer Bernie Silver's new store (**Pic 1**).

During the brief visit, a Public Relations style photo was taken (maybe with some shrewd pre-planning) showing Bernie 'demonstrating' a Bell & Howell slide projector to Sabrina. The rest is history: Bernie, his hand upon the slide changer and even his background shadow were expertly air brushed out to create what became arguably one of Australia's outstanding photographic product advertisements. Someone, somewhere, may have even more first-hand knowledge about the mastermind of this. Of course, it was well before computers or Photoshop had even been dreamt of. Apparently there were 'in-store' Sabrina-themed promotional display items as well. One wonders if any exist today?

The Palec series of exposure meters are interesting because of where they were made and by whom. I have found three of them. The PE-1 is all black, the PE-2 is all cream and the PE-3 is black and cream. They were made by Paton Electrical Pty. Ltd. of 90, Victoria Street, Ashfield, NSW. That's where they were made, now to by whom. Fred Paton was born and grew up around Bowral and trained as an electrical engineer with the Maritime Wireless Company of Randwick. He went to Gallipoli as a field engineer and then on to France where he was injured, getting shrapnel in his legs.

Returning to Australia as a disabled veteran he eventually established a radio-manufacturing business in Ashfield and, in the early 1930s, formed a partnership with Slade Radio. This did not prove long lasting and, by 1938, he had set up as Paton Electrical Pty. Ltd., the premises being at, in and around, his home at 90, Victoria Street, Ashfield. The company employed six staff and were



Pic. 1. Palec Models PE-1 and PE-2.

making radio-testing equipment such as tube testers, multimeters, etc. They provided a lot of items for the Defence Department during WW2. Their equipment built up an enviable reputation for quality, accuracy and ruggedness.

It seems that during the early 1950s they tried their hand at exposure meters and thus we have the PE-1, the PE-2 and the PE-3. The meters are not just clones of a different colour but had significant differences and, I would guess, a logical

progression in their development. **Pic. 1** shows a PE-1 and 2 together and they seem the same, but the dials are totally different and the speed comparison charts are also different.

Who remembers these scales? On the PE-1 we have ASA, BS, Scheiner, Weston, H&D and Ilford, while on the PE-2 we have BS log., ASA and BS arith., DIN and Weston. They feel the same and look similar but I am assured the PE-2 was more sensitive. The PE-3 is a totally different beast: smaller and much lighter. **Pic. 2** of the Palec PE-3 shows a totally different top plate and dial. The cover of the selenium cell is now of a translucent plastic instead of slotted metal: in appearance a thoroughly modern item.



Pic. 2. Palec PE-3.

The company continued well into the 1950s and, after Fred's death, eventually succumbing to the onslaught of cheap imports it vacated the retail world and concentrated on scientific instruments, evolving into University Paton and continuing until the mid-1970s. For more information on the items they made visit the Radio Museum's site or just Google Paton Electrical.



Pic. 3. Rear view showing LV scales.

Pic. 3 shows the different scales on the backs of the meters.

I Got a NOOKY For Christmas.

Herb Parker.

Yes it's true! I wanted one for Christmas, I paid for it and don't mind admitting it and my wonderful wife Rosetta was perfectly happy about it. Perhaps I should explain:

One evening in late spring about ten years ago my significant other and I were sitting in our respective and identical leather recliners reading. I had my nose in what was then the latest copy of the old 'Photographic Trader' when a particular item caught my eye so I said to Rosetta: "There is a NOOKY advertised here. It's only \$60 and I have been after one for years, so I am going to buy it to give to myself for Christmas." She did not bat an eyelid. Perhaps, knowing me as well as she does, she thought there would be an explanation.

Readers of Back Focus of course know that a NOOKY is a photographic accessory made by Leitz Wetzlar, but believe it or not there are people out there who think that a Nooky is something rather different. I did explain of course, and a somewhat raunchy conversation ensued, all centred on the fact that I was willing to pay \$60 for a NOOKY. Had she known more about these things she might have suggested I use a VIDOM as well (I have one of those too - a supplementary viewfinder for lenses of different focal lengths). There was even talk about fortunes having gone begging! There are of course some who wouldn't know what all that had to do with Leica's - some people really are ignorant!



Leitz NOOKY.



Leitz VIDOM.

between body and the collapsible Summitar lens of my Leica IIIg. One side of the NOOKY screws into the camera body, and the end of the lens tube fits into the other end by using bayonet like slots at the inner lens barrel.

In use the NOOKY couples with the rangefinder and reduces parallax. It also reduces minimum focusing distance from about 3 feet to 18 inches by increasing the distance between lens and focal plane. It is a lovely little gadget and I am so glad I bought a Nooky!

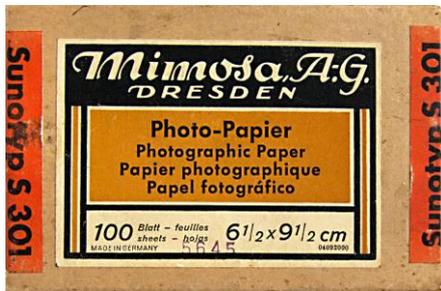
But jokes aside. The blessed item arrived in due course, I tried it and it certainly works. It is quite different in principle to a Proximeter, which is basically a close up lens plus a prism to correct for parallax. The NOOKY fits nicely



Leitz Proximeter or, ADV00.



Our lead article from John Fleming on Cyril Stevens encouraged your Ed to find this family photograph, his parents wedding group, C1935-36. Note how Cyril has hung a real lantern (top centre) in front of his painted backdrop.



Geoff Harrison presents the third in his series, 'Stereo Cameras from the USA'.



Herb Parker's luck changes as he gets a NOOKY!



Stefan Sztromajer presents the Mimosa II.



Roger Burrows explores the Unlisted Ones.



VALE: John O. Friend. 1920-2017