

JANDS STANDS FOR JACKSON & STOREY

by Gary Jackson

JANDS is the biggest production and manufacturing company in the entertainment business in Australia, celebrating 50 years in business in 2020. In fact, JANDS has been operating for 52 years, conceived and nurtured into a thriving lucrative business by Bruce Jackson and Phillip Storey, two gifted teenagers after whom JANDS was named. JANDS was sold to its current owners in 1970 so that Bruce could take up a job offer from Clair Brothers in the US. He worked in the shop designing and building the revolutionary 'Jackson Board' and went out on the road as touring sound engineer for Blood, Sweat and Tears, Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, The Osmond's, The Jackson Five and more. By November 1971 at just 21 years of age, Bruce was on the road in charge of Elvis Presley's touring concert sound and remained Elvis' trusted sound guy for as long as Elvis toured. Bruce spent the next ten years with Bruce Springsteen, James Taylor, Carly Simon, Al Green, Art Garfunkel, Cat Stevens and many more. He stopped touring to build his company APOGEE and was brought back to live sound by an offer he couldn't refuse for Streisand's return to the stage.

It all started somewhere. This is my eye-witness account of JANDS' formative years:

Fifty two years ago in 1968 Bruce Jackson and Phil Storey were restless teenagers, dissatisfied with the Electrical Engineering course at the University of New South Wales. They knew the professional value of a formal degree but were smart enough to realise that any student who knows more than the teachers is wasting his or her time in a classroom situation.

Bruce and Phil both dropped out of UNSW about the same time, in their first year. With more disappointment than arrogance Phil said he found the lecturers were way behind what he and Bruce were already working with in applied electronics. Phil said he looked ahead and found there was little he could expect to learn from four to five years at university.

Bruce and Phil already had a working relationship via a shared interest in solid state electronics and sound amplification going back to their school days at Vacluse High. Now out in the real world with a

pressing financial imperative to make some money they experimented with super-powerful amplifiers, sensing a viable commercial market in rapidly proliferating local bands.

Our father encouraged Bruce and Phil to formalise their business relationship. They needed a good business name to register but couldn't think of one so went with Bruce's idea which was *J & S Research Electronics* and duly formed a limited liability company using that name.

NEW SOUTH WALES
BUSINESS NAMES ACT, 1962
Section 7 (4)

Certificate of Registration of Business Name

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the undermentioned business name is registered under the Business Names Act, 1962.
Unless previously cancelled, registration will remain in force until the date shown hereon.

J. J. O. Ryan
Registrar of Companies

Business name and address of place or principal place of business:

J. & S. RESEARCH ELECTRONICS
56 WUNULLA ROAD,
POINT PIPER.

Date of expiry of registration. 25th June, 1971
Business Name No. 068342

B 102
RP 100 V.C.N. Blight, Government Printer

The J stood for Jackson and the S for Storey. They would need business premises and had seen advertised in the local paper an old residential flat on the first floor above a florist and next to the newsagent in Rose Bay. Our father encouraged them to embrace the risk and lease it. This would be their place of business if they could afford the cheap rent but paying the rent implied a reliable income stream, which they didn't have. Nor did they have good access from the street. The single door entrance ten metres down a narrow pathway between the two old brick buildings made it difficult to load and unload bulky hire equipment with the vehicle illegally parked in a no-standing zone with one eye open for the inflexible parking police, who could and did appear from nowhere to

write a ticket in the time it took to carry a speaker upstairs and run back down for another. They duly paid fines with the money they had worked so hard to earn the previous night. Knuckles were grazed on the brick walls no matter how carefully those big speaker boxes and spotlight stands were manoeuvred along the pathway. For now, however, the premises were more-than-suitable for a Research Electronics business, whatever that was.

Bruce: "We designed and built everything there: lighting rigs, amplifiers, dimmers, PA's ... it was totally hands-on. We designed the printed circuit boards, etched them, drilled them and assembled the components."

Research and Development firms face a constant dilemma in deciding when is the right time to make the prototype and take it to market. Bruce would want a design perfected on paper before making it but Phil would want it made and then expect to work the bugs out. At some point they would have to go ahead and turn their great ideas into marketable products and cash. They could both agree on one thing: they would generate income by hiring out sound equipment to the burgeoning local bands.

A softly spoken customer climbed the stairs into the J&S Research Electronics office sometime in 1968. In a few minutes he had mapped out a path to their first commercial marketable product. The mysterious customer was well-over six feet tall, with an afro haircut and hand-painted shoes. His name was Roger Foley, or was it?

Bruce: "We started building custom psychedelic lighting gear for psychedelic showman Roger Foley, otherwise known as Ellis D. Fogg. I met Roger at one of his lunchtime lightshows in the Roundhouse at the University of New South Wales where we were supplying the sound for bands who were just starting out then but were soon to become part of Australian music folklore. Most Australians who were teenagers at that time will have indelible recollections of local bands such as *Max Merritt and the Meteors*, *Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs*, *Wendy Saddington and Chain*, *Spectrum*, *Jeff St John and the Id*, *Doug Parkinson*, *King Fox*, *Tully*, *Zoot*, *Col Joy*, *The Deltones*, *The Loved Ones*, *The Seekers*, *The Dave Miller Set*, *Easybeats*, *Johnny Farnham*, *Hush*, *La de Das*, *Master's Apprentices*, *Marcia Hines*, *Skyhooks*, *Taman Shud*, *Tin Tin* and many more. It was a lively, happening scene".

Roger Foley, alias Ellis D. Fogg

Roger Foley: "I met Bruce Jackson and Phillip Storey at a gig in the UNSW Roundhouse when they were 18. Up until then, various engineering students at the University of New South Wales had made equipment for me to my specifications. Bruce and Phillip were the first to make a business out of it with their company JANDS, which I named for them and which they sold in 1970'.



'JANDS is now the biggest production and manufacturing company in the entertainment business in Australia. I still have some of the original equipment Bruce and Phil made for me in 1968, still in working order.'

Masquerading as his alias Ellis D. Fogg, Roger was supplying lighting effects that went way beyond simply enhancing the music: he was delivering a concert experience in his own right. Roger became widely known and popular amongst Sydney's fun-loving university-students for his invention of the performance-enhancing Lightshow.

Bruce: "Roger knew what appealed to the modern teenage brain of the late sixties and he was good in the workshop at making prototype products to achieve it. As we realised later, some of the ideas had been derived from existing products but his genius was in finding new applications. He adapted for lightshow use theatrical stage lighting devices like the colour wheel: an aluminium disc with five coloured gel windows turned by an electric motor and through which a spotlight shone, constantly changing the colour and mood of the room. Roger was the father of the magical colour organ, run by electronic processors that translated sound inputs into a coloured light orchestra. He projected scratchy old black-and-white movies like those of W.C. Field's onto walls and he and his assistants coloured blank 35 mm motion picture film with coloured felt pens and projected them onto the walls as free-form moving art pieces. He revived the mirror ball from the 1920s to add yet another layer of visual psychedelia to the new high-energy music exploding out of the new bands everywhere. If you weren't there you won't have an accurate appreciation of what was going on because nothing like it had happened before or has happened since. Roger built the first recreational-use stroboscope in Australia; a fast-flashing high-energy electronic light, said to trigger a full-blown fit in the susceptible, but I never saw that happen. Most faints, collapses, hypnotic-comatosis and mass hysteria outbreaks at the lightshows I directed were simply alcohol and/or drug induced phenomena."

"We were bumping into Roger all the time at university shows. As we got to know each other we talked about ideas for new products and about manufacturing his lightshow gear for him. He pointed us in the right direction to lighting suppliers he had already found, and was sure they would give us the same 40% trade discount they were giving him. He took us over to Annandale to German lighting products manufacturer Hella, where we opened a trade account to buy the same halogen lights and reflectors that the police used on their patrol cars, and he was right about the discount."

Roger said he hadn't realised until I pointed it out that his professional name Ellis D. sounded very similar to a popular hallucinogenic drug. He said it hadn't occurred to him and was simply an innocent coincidental homophonic. He did admit, however, that the Fogg part of his name was a deliberate clue to what he did for a job. He had a fog machine that blew out clouds non-toxic theatrical fog to create an ambience that enhanced the music experience. In those days, psychedelia and blowing your mind were popular concepts and here was a safe, enjoyable way to expand consciousness without the use of hallucinogenic drugs and alcohol. The fake fog was produced by heating paraffin oil — known by those in the know as fog juice — in a tank until it vaporised. Carbon dioxide also had something to with it. Once the critical temperature had been reached, fog billowed from a nozzle and, like a DeLorean with a flux-capacitor travelling at 88 miles per hour, took those present to another dimension. The fog machine was usually placed on stage behind the band from where the heavier-than-air fog flowed out across the stage and down into the audience to fill the room. Well, we thought that fog machine was a great idea. Roger brought it over to our place to give us a private home demo. We set it up down in the cellar and waited for the oil to heat up. To set the mood we wired up an early prototype colour organ to an amplifier, a colour wheel, a police flasher and a strobe and put on some loud suitably-psychedelic music. It may have been *A Whiter Shade of Pale* by Procol Harum, a just-released profoundly psychedelic song we liked, or it may have been another huge hit by someone else. It may even have been a track from an original UK pressing of Sergeant Peppers LHCB, which I still have and play.

So there we were down in the cellar getting excited and prepared for a harmless mind-altering experience. The *fog juice* oil heated up, the red 'ready' light turned to green and Roger flipped the toggle switch. Thick fog poured out of the pipe with a soft hiss. We were ecstatic and a little alarmed at what was happening but forged on bravely. We switched on the colour organ, the colour wheel, the police flasher and the strobe, half-expecting or hoping the sensory overload would trigger a spectacular fit in someone. We noticed a slight smell of paraffin but we could still breathe without discomfort or ill-effect so we carried on. To our mild disappointment there was no need to call an ambulance but an uncalled-for fire engine arrived. Firemen stormed down to the cellar while the hose crew looked around in the fog for the street hydrant. Their leader wasn't happy at all when we told him there was no fire, just a fog machine. He said 'A f***** fog machine? Why the f*** would anyone want something stupid like that?'. He threatened to call his police mates, but mellowed when we found some cold beers in the fridge.

Bruce and Phil bought their own fog machine and found themselves also in the lightshow business.

Bruce: "We saw ourselves primarily as an electronics research company in the entertainment industry. We designed and manufactured all sorts of lighting, guitar amps and PA gear, in addition to starting a light and sound rental division. The rental division made us some cash to keep the research and development going. Like Roger, we were doing university balls, end-of-year school dances, shows for local councils, Police Boys' Club Dances, Discotheques, concerts and private parties as far north as Hornsby, as far south as Wollongong, and way out west as far as outback Nyngan, one wild unforgettable event that Phil embraced without due restraint. We were in competition with Roger, but there was room enough in the state of New South Wales for both of us and our relationship was cordial and constructive".

"Phil and I each made a \$50 capital injection and we started making guitar amps and strobe lights. We made the printed circuit boards ourselves from scratch. We crammed them with more components than strictly necessary to do an adequate job, and we screen printed the front panels. This was something that Roger wasn't doing; at the time there was no one else doing it but us. At first we called our company J & S Research Electronics, for Jackson and Story. Roger would hire gear from us and pay us by cheque when he returned it or we collected it the morning after. He often complained that J & S Research Electronics was too many words to write on the cheque on a Sunday morning so he started abbreviating it to J and S, and our bank was happy enough to accept that. He remarked to Phil, "You know, you guys should simplify things and call yourselves JandS ...make it a word, and you can own it. You could then add the word Amps...JandS Amps. Sounds good".

Roger Foley: "Phil liked my idea. He drove straight into the city and registered JANDS. JANDS was Australia's first lighting, sound and entertainment electronics manufacturing and hiring company. JANDS is still in business and the biggest such company in Australia."

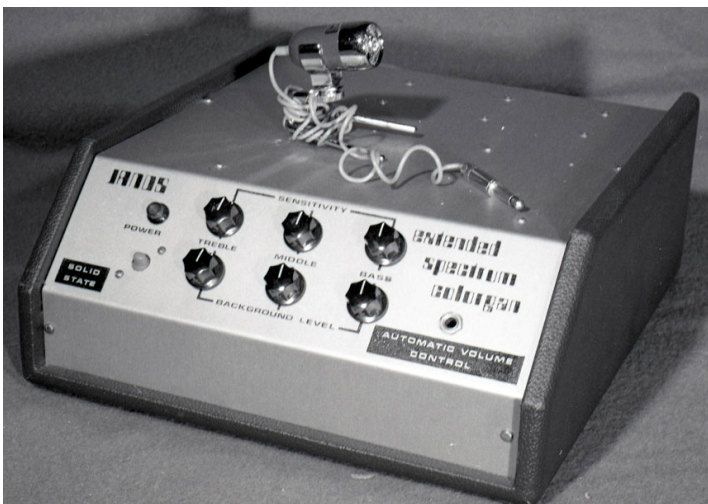
Adrian Wood was a year behind Bruce at Vaucluse High. He was one of the team of four who ran an illegal radio station from the school loft above the stage. Adrian had a good voice as a DJ and was an easy-going, disciplined manager. He was also a handsomely uniformed officer in the school's cadet corps. Adrian fell right into a role at JANDS as business manager, "It was clear from those earliest days that Bruce was the designer; the advanced concept guy. Phillip was the practical one; he knew how to make it cheaply, how to repair it, how to build reliability into it. And that was ultimately their undoing ... the chemical mismatch that resulted in the 1969/1970 blow-up".

"In those early days, however, the tension worked in their favour. They threw ideas at each other. Neither Bruce nor Phil was ever satisfied with anything. Both went hard at it and each other. In a way they were trying to out-do each other".



Phil working on an idea. Bruce looks on to give advice.

"We set up a production line in the back room where Phil had his desk. Phil made the circuit boards. A friend, Gil Macpherson, made the boxes from heavy-duty high-density chip board in his home workshop in Randwick. The argument for having them so strong — and heavy — was that they should be built to survive rough treatment. Being so solid and stiff also helped the sound".



Robust and modern.

*An original JANDS Extended Spectrum
Colour-organ with automatic volume
control.*

*A black textured vinyl veneer was glued to
the outside and the logo silk-screened on.*

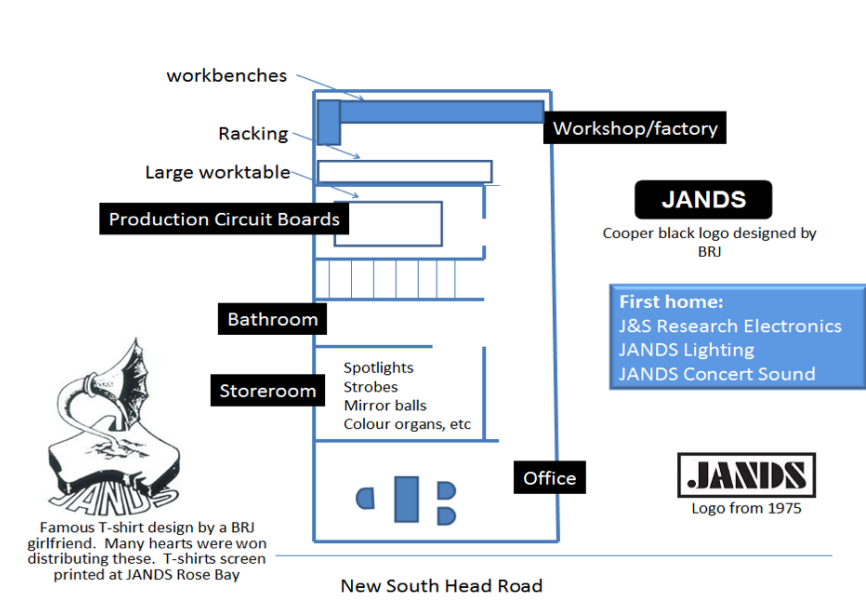
*The valve age had ended, luckily for live music.
Gone were the fragile glass tubes unsuited for the
harsh treatment that their on-the-road rock & roll
application implied.
Solid state was durable and
compact and had a clean new bullet-proof look
and feel.*



Bruce experimented always. He was often criticised by the *"It'll never work!"* chorus but invariably they were silenced when it did work after all. Bruce's respect quotient in and beyond Australia grew and grew. He was becoming trusted to go where no researcher had gone before and that reputation became an invaluable asset.

He saw the need for and found a way to seal solid state components into resin blocks to protect proprietary assets. No one could discover what proprietary secrets were inside the block without destroying it. Some tried. More than once a product came back for repair because the resin block had been ruined in an effort to infiltrate it, "Honestly, I don't know what happened, I found it broken like this. Maybe it was cockroaches or rats".

Bruce also experimented with silk screened control panels on brushed aluminium, the first of a long line of rapid developments.



Adrian Wood drew up this diagram to show how things were organised in the JANDS birthplace, an old residential flat used as an office and factory.

Adrian Wood: "The backroom was the workshop and electronics assembly line. In the next room we made circuit boards via screen printing and acid etching using copper-sulphate photo-resist. We also screen printed posters, handbills and T-shirts on a big work table, which Bruce and Phillip hand-made".

"A gift of an original JANDS T-shirt was highly prized by our female supporters and smoothed the way into many a romantic encounter. We made our own mirror balls in three sizes. Bruce included family in production activities wherever possible, such as paying our mother to glue hundreds of little two centimetre square mirrors with Araldite onto forty centimetre diameter fibreglass balls to make those mirror balls. Yes, it was getting close to mindless slave labour but our mother was more than willing to help and insisted that she not be paid".

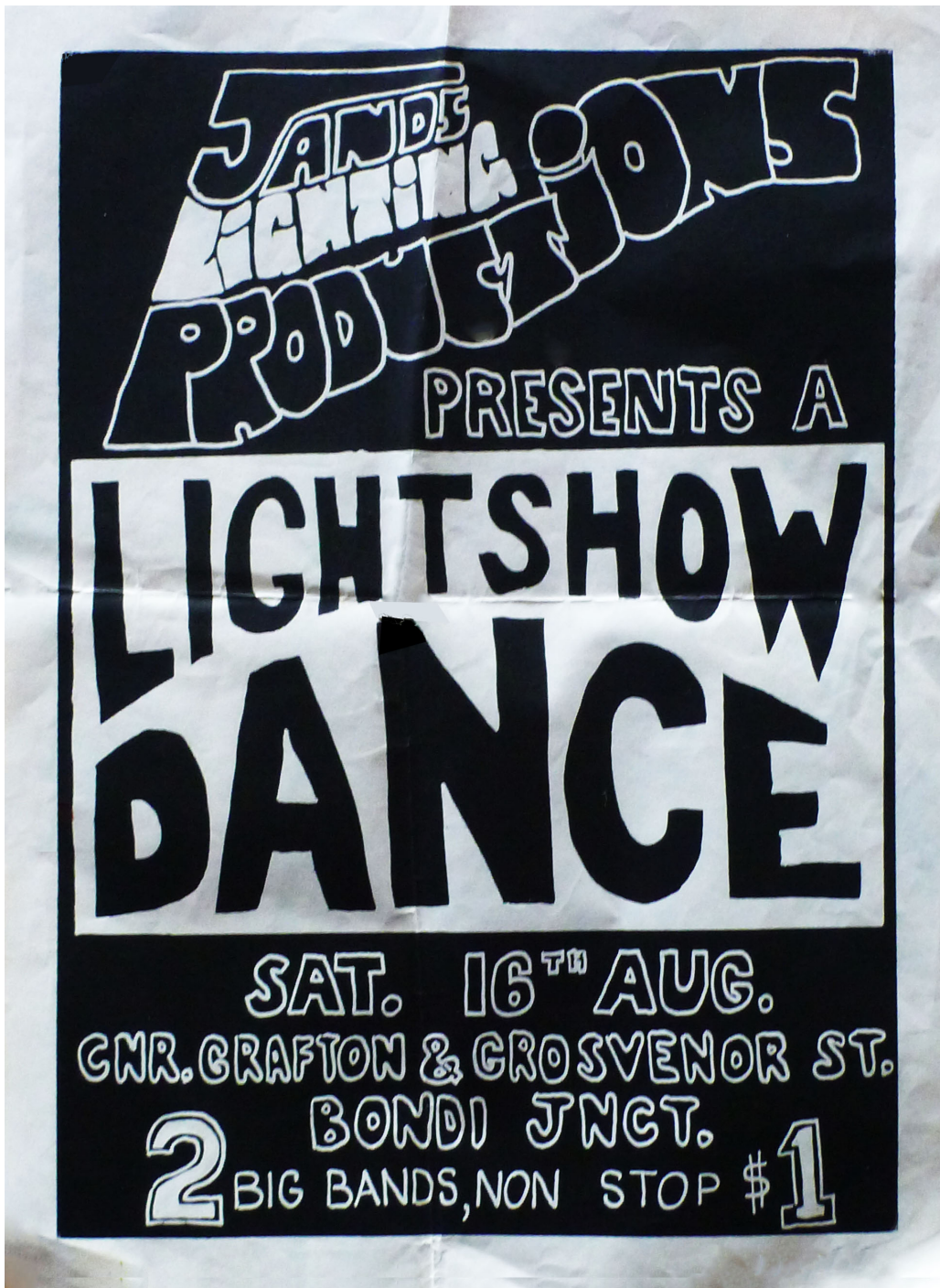
"JANDS also made crystal colour balls; strobe units; colour organs; chasers; amplifiers; speaker crossovers; and eventually some rather crude lightshow controllers. We bought in spot lights and flood lights, and fog machines which Phillip modified for longer, better, bigger effects".

"We used the bathroom for mixing chemicals, permanently staining the old sink, bath and toilet. Past the stairs was a small room where most of the hire equipment was stored. JANDS had a very good relationship with Strand Electric, the UK-based company that manufactured the world's best theatre lamps, so we had a lot their spot lights and flood lights. We also stocked, for sale and hire, strobe lights; colour organs; chaser lights; fog machines; a few guitar amps; maybe 8 or 10 PAs; microphones (AKG mainly), with some Sennheiser as they were good for drum re-enforcement".

An early Jands top-of-the-range strobe. It was smart on the inside and robust on the outside. It was said to trigger alpha-wave seizures but we never experienced that ourselves nor witnessed it in others.



"We kept the speaker cabinets stacked in the hallway, but rarely all of them because there wasn't room. Rather than carry them up the narrow stairs only to carry them down again, often they were just left in the back of the blue Ford Transit van that served as delivery truck, mobile bar, party machine and emergency overnight accommodation".

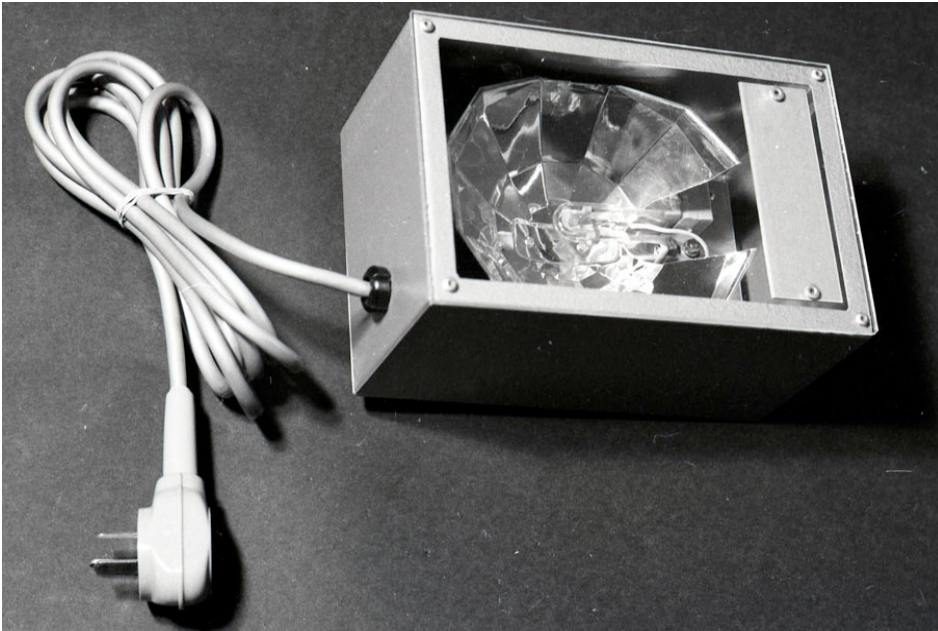


Bruce ran the advertising department, including preparing the artwork and doing the printing. Everything was done in-house.

"I made up the first JANDS price list and I was the bush-lawyer who wrote the Hire Contract. We had it printed in pads and we'd fill the forms out laboriously in duplicate with a Bic ballpoint pen, and had both parties sign. No one ever didn't pay us but a few tried".

"Most things were done in-house. Posters, T-shirts, flyers and product branding were silk screened. Bruce did the artwork and printing".

"In 1970 we employed an English girl Audrey ... tall, curly blond hair, posh accent. She was good on the telephone, a big help with administration and soon became Bruce's girlfriend. We were getting very busy, spending more time on the road and less time in the office. It was not unusual to have four to five gigs to manage on a Friday night, and then again on the Saturday, and occasionally on Sunday".



The metal-cased standard-sized strobe light was reasonably priced and popular. They were durable except for the halogen bulb, but we supplied a spare and charged for breakages.

"Bruce and I developed and promoted some package deals — the big value \$30 lightshow that I could just fit into my Fiat 124 Sports - and the economy \$15 lightshow, transportable in Bruce's tiny white Morris Minimatic two-door sedan with room for a girlfriend in the front passenger seat if she was prepared to nurse the strobe and/or mirrorball on her lap".

"For any bigger gig we used the Ford Transit. We loved and abused that very second-hand van but it hardly complained as we worked its dented back doors off. It was a mission driving it back to Rose Bay from a show in Wollongong at 3am in winter in a fog ... with no radio, no de-mister, no heater, one windscreen wiper, not much tread on the tyres and probably very little oil in the engine. The sliding driver's door wouldn't close properly and the cool winter zephyrs whistled in playfully through the gaps. The three-speed automatic transmission struggled to get it and its load of sound and lighting gear up the big hill at Mt Ousley in the slow lane being overtaken in the fog by tired long-haul drivers in big articulated trucks, but that's the way it was and no one went on strike or raised hardship or danger as an issue".

A fluorescent sticker Bruce made in the image of his girlfriend, Margaret Dickinson.



Bruce: "The next thing we knew JANDS started to become really successful and the rental division was paying for us to design new stuff. But we were young and both of us had differing strong views about things and eventually started to annoy each other".

Adrian Wood: "It was clear that the Bruce-Phillip relationship had turned toxic. Several times I came back from the bank, or from a pickup or delivery, to find them fighting. One time they were throwing chassis and transformers at each other. I don't know what that particular argument was about but I do know that Bruce already had his sights set on the USA. Phillip wanted JANDS to be mega-big in Australia. Phillip was more into psychedelics, lighting and reality distortion. Bruce was always focused on sound. I counselled them to sell the business to put an end to the bloodshed".

"One Friday afternoon hire-customers Eric Robinson and Paul Mulholland turned up at the JANDS office to collect some gear they had ordered. They could tell immediately the atmosphere was frosty. Bruce had cuts on his face and Phillip's glasses were broken. All four were in the backroom, trying to have a sensible conversation but clearly it wasn't working. Bruce was being civil, but Phillip was abusive and dismissive of these North Shore invaders, who were after all good customers and so his attitude was hard to fathom. I went out to the front office to get their paperwork ready for their weekend hires. Paul came out to the front room to find out from me what the hell was going on. That was the start of discussions on taking over JANDS. Captain Mulholland, a Qantas pilot, funded the takeover. Phillip stayed on as a consultant. And now, JANDS has become the great big success Phillip always dreamed of. He has always kept some kind of loose-tight consulting or advisory link but Bruce was off and away".

Read the full JANDS story and what happened next in my book 'Bruce Jackson On The Road With Elvis' (www.brucejackson.com.au)

-Gary Jackson