

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that the Committee of the Melbourne Section reports the passing of one of its members, **John Ryan**, at the age of 53. He died in his sleep on Sunday, September 10, 1989.

John had served for many years as Melbourne Section committee secretary until ill health prevented him from working. He continued to serve as a committee member until the time of his death. During his tenure he played a key role in setting up the necessary facilities for a highly successful presentation on Film Sound for Major Productions by Tom Holman at the first Melbourne Convention in 1984.

Born in 1936, John, as a teenager, became interested in films and film sound. At the time of the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956, he began work at Herschells, a Melbourne audio-visual company that had the contract for the sound facilities at the games. Shortly after, he joined the Australian Broadcasting Commission and worked in its Melbourne radio studios on technical operations.

Apart from radio, John continued his interest in film and was qualified as a 35-mm projectionist. In the early 60s, these two interests led him to transfer to the new territory of television, where he became the second Melbourne ABC Television film sound recordist. He gained wide experience over a whole range of assignments from documentary to drama, natural history, and current affairs. In those days the technology was not quarter-inch tape, but 16-mm magnetically coated sprocketed film. He was at the forefront of development of techniques in this field, involved in the film sound work for "Bellbird," one of the first popular drama series produced by ABC that led the way for countless similar developments on commercial TV channels.

John joined the AES in the early 60s and soon became active in the Melbourne Section when it was formed in 1974. His contemporaries at ABC remarked on his immense desire for knowledge and his ability to make things work. At ABC, he specialized in film sound postproduction in the dubbing theater, and as senior sound recordist, he was responsible for putting the new ABC film sound production suite at Carr Street into operation. Of course, it was with great pride that he was able to show this facility to AES members a few years ago.

When the Melbourne Section decided to hold the 1984 Convention there, John made a substantial contribution. His wife Betty was also deeply involved in supporting the society during this time. John's efforts were acknowledged when he was given recognition at the convention. However, by the time the 1988 convention came around, the effects of his illness prevented him from being as fully involved with the organization as he desired. It also distressed the committee that he was denied the satisfaction of full participation in a successful convention.

Although John's illness prevented him from working, in the last year he was able to indulge his love of travel, and realize a lifelong ambition to visit Universal Studios and Disneyland — both a Mecca to anyone who has a love of the cinema. A keen photographer, his regular visits to Caloundra in Queensland always resulted in him returning with another collection of photographs.

In marking John's passing, the committee would like to affirm its appreciation of his contribution to the Melbourne Section, and express its profound sadness at the loss of a professional colleague and personal friend.

John D. Smyth, *chairman*
Melbourne Section.