

From Soho to No Go?

Proposed Crossrail route could cripple London post industry

For years we have heard that there was to be an east west rail link across London; that there will be lots of official enquiries; that there will be massive investment. We have heard that it will be good for

Street through to Centrepont and then east to Stratford and Customs House where the routes will go over ground. [Www.crossrail.co.uk](http://www.crossrail.co.uk) will indicate how this major piece of civil engineering could effect your business.

will be in the Post Office yard in Newman Street. This suggests a continuous jam of heavy vehicles from Newman Street into Soho Square and Dean Street, for possibly as long as seven years!



London to link the western and eastern suburbs, making it more economical for people to travel into central London. But also, for years we all just assumed that it would never happen. That was until London won the 2012 Olympics, the very year targeted for the completion of the Crossrail link.

The Crossrail Bill received its second reading in the Commons on 19th July. In doing so, the House approved the principal of the project. The Bill will now be considered by the Select Committee that will consider any petitions against the Bill.

Crossrail will run from Maidenhead to Shenfield with a spur off to Abbey Wood. Major tunnelling will take place from Paddington, under Gt. Marlborough

Soho may become a major building site. All of the area between Soho Square and Charing Cross Road will be levelled to allow tunnelling works

Soho may become a major building site

using Soho Square as the main staging area. This will mean the end of the Astoria Theatre and adjacent buildings. Tottenham Court Road station will be linked to a new station farther to the west on Oxford Street. Construction will be needed between Dean Street and Wardour Street with new street level entrances at Oxford Street. A new station is also planned to link to Bond Street. The staging point for lorries removing debris and supplying materials

Aside from vibration from an expected four years of tunnelling, there will be airborne noise from the general construction, vehicles and support works. Keeping clients happy within this major construction site will be a huge problem. It could be too much for us to expect them to cope with it.

The APRS, together with UK Post and other trade bodies, is gearing itself up to help our members get their message heard. I was deeply concerned that at an initial meeting, few had any idea as to the reach of Crossrail and just how serious the impact could be. This is the time to voice your concerns. Many voices are more powerful than one and I hope that you work with us to make sure that the right message is made.

RECENT NEW APRS MEMBERSHIPS

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Too Many College Courses?

Nikki Affleck, Studio Manager for Sanctuary Townhouse Studios definitely thinks so!

Back in the day, there was only one audio engineering course that I, as a studio manager, knew about; and that was Gateway. If this was on a CV that I received, I knew the prospective applicant would be trained to an acceptable standard, although personally, I have always placed far more emphasis on studio etiquette than an individual's ability to twiddle knobs. If an assistant engineer can get along with people in the pressured environment of a studio in excess of twelve hours a day, then that can be far more of a talent and one that can never be taught! Which brings me to my rant.

These days, every college in the country appears to have an audio engineering course that is seemingly set-up with no input from the actual working studio environment. I recently heard that a college in Newcastle had installed no less than eight SSL consoles for audio engineering training purposes. So where do all these colleges, in some case fee paying, expect all these students to find jobs within the ever decreasing world of pro recording?

Sadly, due to previous bad experiences with students, I nowadays, only employ from personal recommendation within the industry or via work experience

and only offer three to five, one week placements per year.

I find it very dishonest and irresponsible of these colleges to offer false hope to students, suggesting that there will be a career for them at the end of a one or three year course. Surely, we as a professional body, should have more input into the requirements of these courses which are allegedly producing the future assets of my business and our industry.

Want to get something off your chest? Email it to info@aprs.co.uk and we'll share it with the industry!

Dave Ward, APRS Director of Education replies:

It is truly scary how many courses pop up across the country every day. Believe me there are even more in the pipeline.

Five years ago, at the request of studio managers, the APRS-MPG set up a scheme whereby we could accredit (kite-mark) those courses that are appropriate to employment in our industry. We created a very rigorous set of criteria and trained very respected people in our industry to go out and "vet" these courses. This is called the APRS-MPG Course Accreditation Scheme and, as the name implies, the scheme is now administered by the APRS-MPG Joint Education Committee.

Unfortunately, we are not going to stop the proliferation of courses. However, we can try and monitor which ones are likely to provide the type of employee we need. To help our employer members we have also created a searchable database of graduate CVs from the courses that

have accreditation. This can be accessed from the APRS web site and the appropriate password obtained by emailing the office. We have also been working very closely with organisations like Edexcel to ensure that new qualifications contain the areas that are important to us like etiquette, basic business skills and critical listening.


Having said this, I believe that we need to take a new view on courses and their development. Always bearing in mind that there are few jobs in the industry and that it is immoral to promise students job opportunities that don't exist. At the same time, I am always amazed at the number of students who find a place in the music industry and not necessarily in our sector. They go into live sound, theatre sound, record companies, publishers and many become self-employed engineers.

A good course is usually designed to give students a broad academic,

educational and vocational experience that will equip her or him with the transferable life-skills and confidence needed for work in any sector. What is interesting about our industry is the great breadth of knowledge and experience that we employ: technology, literacy and numeracy, group dynamics, choice making, creativity and the use of imagination, business skills, research and project planning are a few areas that provide a wonderful opportunity for a rounded education and gives students a lot of creative fun and satisfaction in the process.

I believe that we have a responsibility to support those courses that take such a responsible approach and it is the support mechanism that we are planning within the Joint Education Committee in cooperation with government bodies.

Dave Ward founded Gateway Studios (now merged with Phoenix 2 at Pinewood) and the Gateway School of Recording. Gateway is 30 years old next year.



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Export Dreams and Schemes by Peter Filleul

The development of UK Trade and Investment's support schemes (SESA) continues, with the DTI confirming that, from 2006, only "New to Export" companies will be eligible for a grant of up to £1,800 through the RDAs (Regional Development Agencies). The relevant trade associations (APRS) would then administer the paperwork to RDAs and check attendance at the event - taken from a list of events approved by UKTI. No after-show paperwork is needed other than confirmation that the company attended.

One glimmer of hope is that groups of companies (including those that are not new to export) that wish to attend exhibitions in Asia (principally China and India) will be able to partake in UK stands at approved exhibitions. Other trade organisations already have established relationships with some Asian shows - though none really focus on pro-audio. The APRS will advise as to which approved shows are taking place so that companies can get in touch with the relevant trade organisation on an ad hoc basis.

The APRS will request that the AES Conventions are included in the "Key Exhibitions" list, but we fear there will be very few companies qualifying as "New to Export" and UKTI may take the view that other events should have priority.

The APRS will continue to support companies attending the AES shows, despite the likely loss of grant aid. However, how that support manifests itself will need to be considered in the light of the changing nature of the European and the US based AES conventions.

Recent Events and Goings On Membership Categories, T&Cs, Panels...

Back in June, the APRS hosted an evening at The Bush Bar & Grill to launch its new recording membership categories and revised studio terms and conditions, both reflecting a changing industry. Attended by existing and potential members, lively discussion and wine flowed.



Earlier in September, new APRS members, The Hopsital hosted an APRS/MPG discussion entitled "Do You Want To Buy a Recording Studio?" The celebrated producer/studio owner panel consisted of Robin Miller, Malcolm Atkin, Andy Richards and Carlos Narea who all ably commented on the pros and cons of running a commercial recording facility in the current climate. Interesting discussion included the likelihood of full bandwidth audio being available in iPod type devices in the future. So producing top quality audio is still essential despite the current fashion of listening to compressed (MP3) music whilst playing computer games!

The membership recruitment drive is picking up pace, our four recording categories now addressing the needs of the fast-growing, smaller professional and non-professional members, as well as our existing established membership.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Smoking in the workplace is a contentious issue in the UK, evoking strong feelings on both sides of the debate. So what should employers be doing?

Regulations currently mean you should make suitable arrangements in rest rooms/areas to protect non-smokers from discomfort from tobacco smoke. If a risk to health can be clearly demonstrated, eg. if a worker with a respiratory condition is forced to work in a very smokey atmosphere, which may worsen the condition, the employer must take action to deal with the risk. Until the situation becomes clearer, it is recommended that all businesses produce a sensible policy which should be done in conjunction with all employees so that the rights of both smokers and non-smokers are balanced.

FACTS SUPPLIED BY

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The APRS Business Support Helpline
FREE to all Cat A, B & C members

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Others are using it to help run their businesses
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British Grove Studios

Imagine being asked by one of the world's greatest guitarists to build him a studio.

This was the challenge presented to studio manager, David Stewart and studio designer, Dave Harries by Mark Knopfler a couple of years ago. Mark already owned a studio in Holland Park which he had outgrown, so a plan was devised to build something larger and more comfortable which would provide him with greater flexibility and increased facilities.

After much debate over whether to build from scratch or modify an existing available studio site, a beautifully positioned building in Chiswick became available for redevelopment. Originally a glue and dye works, (where it is said that linoleum was invented) this property presented enough area and height to incorporate the proposed large recording spaces.

Work finally began in earnest with acoustic design being handled by Munro Associates and Rob Haggas of Westwick supervising design and installation of audio and specialised

electrics. Equipment selection was not to be an automatic choice as Mark and his producer, Chuck Ainlay are great recording traditionalists. For this reason much of the cherished equipment at British Grove is hand-picked, high quality, classic gear collected from sources the world over.

Installed alongside the lovely new 84 channel Neve 88R is an API Legacy, an EMI TG of 1970 vintage plus a Beatles type EMI Redd 51 all-valve desk from 1962. This extensive range of equipment has now been successfully incorporated into several superb recording spaces, including two large 5.1 control rooms together with an extremely versatile 1600 sq. feet recording area containing no less than 7 fully adjustable booths and electronically controlled variable acoustics. Despite the trials, tribulation, trauma and triumphs of studio building, the completed result has definitely lived up to expectations.

For bookings and more information on British Grove Studios, please call 020 8741 8941.

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COMPETITION



As a prize for answering a very simple question, Focal Press are kindly offering a copy of their recent publication "Designing Sound for Animation" by Robin Beauchamp. It features -

- a nuts-and-bolts guide to sound design for animated films, explaining audio software, free downloads, how sound works...
- case examples giving extra tips and tricks
- a highly instructional DVD with sound clips

Question - "What is the website address giving full detail of the proposed Crossrail route?"

Email answers, marked Competition, to info@aprs.co.uk. Good luck!

See more info at www.focalpress.com

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