



EVENT GROUP - COMPANY RESUME

Ray Lowe Sound Equipment commenced hiring audio systems and Hammond organs in 1975/6 based at Crossways Centre, Braye Road, supplying equipment to scores of local bands, groups and solo acts who performed around the Island at numerous venues. Being a qualified musician, Ray was very knowledgeable of the needs of musicians and specialised in hiring and selling the best possible and most suitable equipment.

From 1977, outdoor pa systems were included. These operated firstly from a Commer 2000 Van (which lasted a few months!) and later in 1977 from a customised Ford Transit Parcel Van affectionately known as "Big Rig". In 1982 the first Mobile PA caravan was designed and custom built for Event use; now there are three Mobiles.

One of the first installations was at the 'Track' football pitch, in 1977. The Football Clubs (then the 'Amalgamated') had good value from this system as Event Services only replaced it all again in 2008. Events then were mainly charitable fetes and Sports meetings. In 1978/9, the equipment base expanded greatly as more organisations started using our services, some of these organisations are still clients today such as The Guernsey Powerboat Association, the Lions Club of Guernsey, SPARKS Charity Cricket – now known as The Lord's Taverners, and in 1979 we were contracted for the first time to provide facilities and PA to the 'Liberation Day Celebrations' (which was then entitled 'Fete for Peace' held in Saumarez Park) – something we are still doing to this day.

In 1981 Ray was contracted by the Guernsey Greffe to take on the maintenance of the Courts' audio and logging systems, and supply and install the new Cour Ordinaire equipment in 1983. This contract is still ongoing, and he has designed and overseen the installation of a fully digital and computerised recording system along with video and witness equipment.

Sound and Light installations were done in almost all the entertainment venues, discos, clubs, bars and pubs throughout the Bailiwick, along with virtually all the local Churches, many Schools and Public buildings. Detailed records are kept of every job – even though some of the venues have long since gone. In the peak of the 80's disco era, the vast majority of systems installed in Guernsey were from Ray's business, and maintained by him.

By 1982 the entertainment business had expanded sufficiently to create **The Musical Alternative** – a dedicated music shop at Crossways Centre, dealing in keyboards, organs, pianos, general musical instruments and audio systems. For three years following he was awarded the *Hammond Organ Dealer of the Year* for highest sales of electronic organs per capita in the South of England. Hundreds of people learnt music through the shop, which offered lessons as part of the sales package.

The public address and events side changed its name to **Electrosound** - specialising in hire, sales and installation of professional audio equipment. There were also two other companies operating under the Ray Lowe Sound Equipment Ltd. umbrella - *Guernsey Radiophones* (who provided radio communications equipment to taxis and other commercial operators, and were agents for Pye & Philips radiotelephones) and the Island's first commercially based Radio Station - *Offshore Radio 104.7* We designed, created and ran the studio equipment and produced many of the programmes. The radio microphones and 'talk-back' facilities designed and built for *Offshore radio* were a pioneering idea which is now common place in broadcasting, but then was almost unheard of outside of major radio stations. Both the latter enterprises were sold in 1983 and 1987 respectively, to concentrate on the core businesses.

Throughout the growth of the business, innovation has been prevalent. Many of the electrical and electronic systems we pioneered are now industry standard, and much of the audio systems were designed and built locally, suited to the needs of local venues and clients.

By 1986 the remaining two businesses had grown considerably and The Musical Alternative was sold, allowing Electrosound to expand yet further - becoming **Electrosound Site Services**. The name change reflected the wider range of products offered - including builders' plant, generators, lighting and Rollalong [portable cabin type] buildings - of which over 170 were sold in the first 4 years as agents in the Channel

Islands. Event Group still handle numerous cabins sales and hires, and many classrooms, site huts, storage facilities, offices etc are visible all around the Island – supplied by us.

In 1983, the whole business moved to its custom built premises in the Braye Road, realising the dream that Ray had always had to consolidate the business on one site as opposed to the many stores and yards /fields /old tunnels and garages previously used for storage. Expansion continued and during that time the company had up to 16 employees serving the vast majority of all the Island's events and functions.

Following discussion with the Garenne Group, in 1990 a deal was made to create Local Leisure Ltd, which encompassed Sueco Marquee hire and Sueco Catering; both of whom Electrosound had enjoyed a strong working relationship with, providing a comprehensive service for function facilities from one operation. However, in 1993, Local Leisure Ltd decided to divest itself of Electrosound's assets and Ray re-acquired all the previous stock, and re-commenced trading as Ray Lowe's Event Services, still based at the premises in Braye Road.

Since 1994 substantial investment has been made in new stock, new product lines, vehicles and staff training, entirely financed through trading.

The company's wide range now includes:

Over 19,000 sq. foot of Marquees and Tents – almost all of which is high specification aluminium frame system, allowing much of the materials to be interfaced to create large or unusual structures. It is undoubtedly the biggest single stock of Tents in the Channel Islands, and can rival many mainland companies.

Over 4,000 sq foot of flooring for the marquees - much of which was been designed and built locally - part of the work which ensures continued employment for the staff all year round.

Furniture - in excess of 2500 items of furniture are held in stock; tables and chairs, cloak rails, etc. for any occasion.

Generators and electrical distribution equipment for temporary site power. Generators range from portable 1kVA units to super silenced 200kVA set - enough to power 20+ houses from one generator! All voltages are catered for - 110/240/415. Nearly 3.5 km of cable is in stock, along with numerous distribution and safety switching gear.

Temporary Stages, Portable Dance floors - an extremely versatile system of stages which interlock, stack or stand alone. They can create stages and catwalks anywhere, as has been seen in Castle Cornet or on Les Cotils lawn and frequently around Town outdoor venues.

Site Lighting ; as well as the dozens of floodlights, , chandeliers, uplighters and decorative lighting, are a large quantity of 110v lighting specifically for use on building site in accordance with the latest regulations.

Stage Lighting and effects although we have always hired and supplied 'disco' type lighting, there is now a demand for a wide selection of effects for stage use, band shows, large parties, etc. and we have invested heavily in "intelligent" [computer controlled] lighting and projectors and Star cloth (glittering night skies for the Marquees) and the latest styles of LED lighting including architectural lighting.

Customised vehicles include Trucks with crane and a Personnel hoists ('cherry picker') access equipment.

Permanent Staff numbers have greatly increased from just 2 in 1993, with a team of part time specialists available when large events are to be handled. Whilst there are no specific courses available in this line of work, all the staff have undergone basic training in allied skills, and certain staff have attended special courses locally and in the U.K. particularly in Marquee Rigging and Safety, Crane handling, mechanised loading, Working at Height Safety, First Aid, etc.

The company works to, and beyond the U.K. Health and Safety Executive directives for Event Safety - as was proven after a Risk Assessment Audit when an English Consultant advised the Liberation Committee that our work was extremely conscientious and faultless; he even consulted us in depth about other aspects of the Event industry he was unfamiliar with!

In 1996 we supplied equipment to over 1,100 functions, and the 'record' year was 2002 when over 1,400 events were logged.

It is a very unique company: In the U.K., several specialist companies would operate on site under the direction of a management organisation to design, co-ordinate and create the infrastructure of a major event, including a Marquee contractor, electricians, lighting technicians, flooring specialists, generator and plant suppliers, toilet services, etc. But in an Island, you cannot call upon these other companies at will, thus it is all done from a “one stop event shop”.

Event Services designed and developed some of the earliest ‘re-circulating’ mobile public toilets, and major manufacturers still use a refined version of our original models. We operated several of these mobile toilets, which were used at all the Island’s social functions.

A major disruption occurred in 2002 when after years of ‘battling’ with the Island Development Committee to secure the continuing use of the premises, Ray decided enough was enough and closed the business – which sparked a great public outcry and media attention. This resulted in a change of heart from the authorities who allowed the building of the present premises and use of the land. “The most wonderful thing that kept us going was the public outcry and good wishes given that we should carry on”.

Events House opened in 2003 and the company further expanded its facilities, to include a **Plant Division** specialising in plant, generators, and access equipment – “cherry pickers”. For a time the Plant Division was an *International Powered Access Federation* recognised centre, with a fully qualified Instructor in Working at Height Regulations and Practises; although this has now ceased due to the excessive costs of certification in a small Island.

The essence of the company’s success is simply readiness to accept a challenge and an excellent team of staff. Very long hours are worked during the summer - but good humour and enjoyment of the work prevails; no two days are ever the same; no two jobs are identical. The key personnel have been employed in the business for many years and all work together as a team. Ray’s policy is to try and not hire just

seasonal staff, but to provide all year round employment for local people, who spend the winter months re-furbishing a lot of the equipment, and building new hire items.

Many of our customised 'gadgets' which we have designed and built for use within this business have been adopted by other manufacturers in the U.K. and even our competitors.

We originate; other imitate!

By cautious diversity the company enjoys a stable, all year round turnover, although the workload obviously increases in the summer months, and Christmas is also very busy being main contractors for the St. Peter Port, Bridge and St. Martin's Lights.

Notable events include one weekend of 4/5th July 1997 when we had over 16,000 sq.ft of marquees on hire at 3 different venues for 3 major functions, and collectively over 1600 diners in them: Complete with all furniture, power, generators, lighting, stage and entertainment systems, toilets, etc. A major logistical exercise, unequalled by any local company since, although as main contractor for Floral Guernsey Shows when held at CambridgePark the marquee area and diversity of equipment came close. (see photo).

Liberation Day 1995 involved over 3 miles of cables and PA systems at 19 areas around the Island with radio links from Pembroke to Bulwer Avenue to La Salerie to Town. Again, all this equipment was designed and built locally for the job – albeit some of the radio was not strictly legal as the licence / permissions did not come through until a month after the event!

Marquees have appeared in the ValeCastle, on the top of Castle Cornet, on the Town Piers, inside quarries, on top a Town Bank, over swimming pools and even inside Beau Sejour Sports hall.

Lining the enormous Beau Sejour Sport Hall to look like a marquee interior for Credit Suisse's Christmas Party was a totally unknown challenge and one of the most rewarding events done against all odds and

silenced many doubters who said it couldn't be done! It was, on time, on budget and very successful. It has been copied many times since.

We are proud that in the past 30 years, every Consieller and Deputy Hustings meeting has employed our equipment and or furniture and every Royal Visit has involved our services in some way.

Over 70% of our work is repeat business - annual events or regular functions, which must indicate a balance of the correct level of service and pricing to retain this business. Whilst we rarely loose customers to a competitor, we frequently gain business from clients who have tried elsewhere, but appreciate our level of service and quality of equipment.

Customer letters after events usually mention the helpfulness of the staff, the standard of service, the attention to detail and un-intrusive way such activities are carried out at functions.

Most importantly, we have never lost sight of the fact that the average private function is a 'one off' - i.e. a Wedding Reception, Anniversary, Special Birthday Party, and therefore must be right the first (and only) time, at the right price. We pride ourselves on getting it right. After 40 years our track record is self explanatory.