

SOHO EDITORS

Soho by name...

...and by nature, now that the brothers Cantwell can extend an open invitation to come up and see them some time in their Centrepoint editing agency. Robert Buckley accepts the invitation

Freelance agency Soho Editors is finally entitled to its name. Almost.

Newly-located in the 30th floor of Centrepoint Tower on Tottenham Court Road (so high up that you can feel the building sway in high winds), it just misses Soho by less than a hundred yards. Still, that's nearer than Blackheath, its former home...

The agency started when Henry-editor Rory Cantwell went freelance in 1992, after helping to set up Locomotion. As the number of freelancers at that time was limited, Cantwell found himself in demand and - not being able to be in two places at the same time - found himself having to recommend other freelancers who could do the work for his clients while he was unavailable. He soon found himself with even more work that he couldn't do...

When his brother Brian returned from working in Jersey, they began to discuss the idea of a freelance agency serving both clients and operators, starting an informal service from Rory's flat in Blackheath in 1997 which

became Soho Editors by September of that year.

"We're not just a diary service: we offer a tailor-made service to clients' requirements and treat operators more like an actors' agency treats actors than a temping agency treats temps," says Brian, who handles the sales and marketing of the firm.

Indeed, in common with the stereotype of most acting agencies, Soho Editors' offices are still a bare collection of desks, tables and a sofa. However, with almost a whole floor of Centrepoint to use, and expansion planned for the next few months, that arrangement won't be permanent.

A conference room for producers and editors to discuss projects in private will be among the first of the new additions, as will a training suite for Editbox fx. Cantwell says that there are plenty of broadcasters who need an advanced training programme that builds on those already offered by manufacturers, as do facilities.

"When a facility upgrades to new software, their operator will get round it pretty



Brian Cantwell surveys the square mile for freelance talent

quickly, but not straight away. We'll provide training for people to get the most out of the systems."

The agency now numbers around 170 freelancers, including telecine operators as well as editors, and offers other services including support and renting out Avid equipment to production companies. It will also be helping its Centrepoint landlords, digital archiving company Intermedia Visions, to run a post-production outfit for its clients in the next few months.

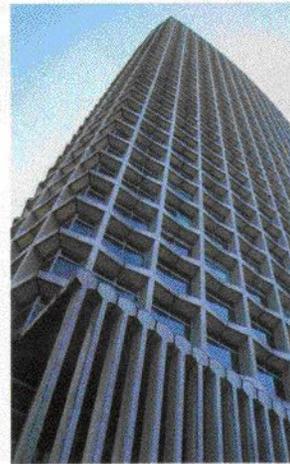
Before freelancers can be put on the firm's books, they go through a thorough scrutiny to make sure they're up to the job. A base requirement of two years' experience in their chosen speciality is the norm, and anyone hoping to fool the company with a

flash showreel on which they were they were just the runner will be disappointed.

"We treat showreels with a pinch of salt," maintains Brian. "We had one guy from South Africa whose showreel was familiar - I'd seen it before. I checked him out and it turned out he'd been only an assistant editor."

Soho Editors has a 50:50 split between overseas and UK clients, and so has plenty of freelancers working abroad. One of its biggest challenges recently has been setting up a three-year contract in New Zealand for post on the three *Lord of the Rings* films being shot back-to-back starting this winter.

Rather than ship operators out there for three years, the company will provide shorter-term contracts with assured



MARK TYNAN

hand-over periods between editors to ensure continuity.

"Soho has a superb reputation and the talent pool of operators here is excellent. I'm not knocking anyone's local talent, but we do have the best in the world here - although New York would dispute that. What our agency is able to do is export that talent to wherever the work is."

As for the new premises, Cantwell is certain the move has been for the better. "It's a superb view, and everyone wants to come back. Now we've got this space, we can expand even more."

IN BRIEF

London effects-house **Realise** has won the 1999 MTV Music award for best sfx in a music video for Garbage's *Special* promo. The team of four animators took six weeks to create the video, which features over 70 multilayer cg shots. "The deadline was so tight, if anything had gone wrong, we would have failed to deliver on time," says Realise's Paul Simpson.



Tele-Cine has completed work on Carlton's *The Waiting Time*, based on the Gerald Seymour novel. Mark Eskenazi online'd the serial, due to air this month, and Mark Stubbs was responsible for invisible effects in Editbox Magnum. Says producer Chris Burt, "those two are the main reasons I come to Tele-Cine."



Component is making the leap into audio, following the installation of a new suite and the hiring of Simon Wright and Paul Gidley of Cyber Audio as sound engineer and producer respectively. The suite is based around a Sadie Artemis digital audio workstation, and has already been used on *Hyp the Street* with Paul McKenna for Objective Productions, on which Component did the finishing.

