

ITN

# THE LENS

The Staff Newspaper for Independent Television News Autumn 1987 Issue No. 25

## Farewell, Leonard...



The earpiece is removed for the last time, closing another chapter in the history of television journalism . . . For 20 years Leonard Parkin was one of ITN's best known faces and one of the best loved TV journalists in the land. When *News at One* became *News at 1230* this summer, he took the opportunity to retire as a regular newscaster. He left Wells Street after a seemingly endless round of farewell dinners, parties and presentations – and an avalanche of good wishes from viewers. But nothing could take away the sadness. As Editor David Nicholas put it: "Leonard's contribution to the development of ITN has been immense. We have said goodbye to a quality journalist and broadcaster and a fine colleague." (Report, profile and more pictures inside.)

## ...and welcome, Julia



Meanwhile, on Monday, September 7, Julia Somerville took over as presenter of *News at 1230* after being warmly welcomed to ITN as Leonard Parkin's successor. She became senior presenter of the BBC's *Nine O'Clock News* after a broadcasting career which began in the BBC Radio newsroom. She worked as a news writer and general reporter then, in 1981, was made BBC Radio's labour correspondent. Said David Nicholas as Julia took her place in ITN's newscasting team: "She has demonstrated to us considerable reporting and presenting skills and she'll do a first rate job on our new 1230 programme. I could not be more delighted."

## Inside . . .

**CHRIS LONG** peers into his computerised crystal ball and sees a dazzling future for ITN graphics

**MARK AUSTIN** plunges into the deep end Down Under and wins bonus points for versatility

**PETER ALLEN**, our man at Westminster, on the art of making political news a best seller

**HOWARD ANDERSON** describes how a trio of peers turned ITN programme makers – and showed the pros a trick or two

**SIMON MARKS** lands a Sri Lanka exclusive and reminds us that the Super Channel team can originate news, too

**FIONA ARMSTRONG** reflects on the contrasting worlds of Border Television and Wells Street

**SUE CARPENTER** recalls early TV news days in sun-baked Dubai where what the sheikhs say usually goes!

**SANDY GALL** leads an ITN charity trek across the Cairngorms to aid a students' TV studies course

**GORDON HICKEY**, our evergreen athletics star, has a field day at the National Indoor Veterans event

**PLUS . . .** pages of news and pictures



# Tinson, Pollard advance: Tait takes over C4 News

In major editorial changes this autumn, **Sue Tinson** was appointed an associate editor of ITN, **Nick Pollard** became the senior programme editor of *News at Ten* and **Richard Tait**, former editor of BBC-TV's *Newsnight*, joined ITN as editor of *Channel Four News*.

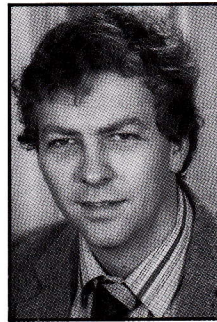
Sue Tinson assumed a wide range of editorial management responsibilities. She will also commission and co-ordinate all ITN special programmes, taking charge of many herself.

Since joining ITN in the mid-1960s, Tinson has produced many notable "specials", including the US elections of 1980 and 1984. This summer she co-ordinated ITN's election campaign coverage.

Nick Pollard, as NAT senior pro-



Tinson



Pollard

gramme editor, now has particular responsibility for presentation and style and for the organisation of the team. He and Phil Moger will be the regular NAT programme editors.

Pollard joined ITN in 1979 from the BBC. Last year he went to China to produce ITN's highly acclaimed coverage of the Queen's historic visit. This year he was programme editor of our election marathon, *Vote '87*.

C4N's new editor, Richard Tait, spent 13 years at the BBC. He worked on the *Money Programme*, was producer and editor for *Nationwide* and became editor of *Newsnight* in 1985. He was editor of the BBC's 1987 election results programme.

Welcoming Tait's appointment, David Nicholas said: "We are delighted. His BBC career has been a distinguished and innovative one. We believe he will develop the successful record of *Channel Four News* even further."

## New places, new faces . . .

In the Channel One newsroom, **Rob Beynon** has been appointed chief sub-editor, *News at Ten*, and **Robin Elias** made chief sub (video). Ex Daily Mirror freelance **Lesley Johnson** joins ITN as a newsdesk assistant.

Reporter **Kevin Dunn** was appointed as ITN's Southern Africa correspondent, and was set to take up his duties once his entry permits had been arranged.

**David Nelson** has been appointed deputy chief sub and will be attached to the House of Lords team.

In a reshuffle of responsibilities for business news on *Channel Four News*, **Tony Hetherington** becomes assistant news editor (business).

ITN's director of engineering, **Peter Ward**, was elected chairman of the ITCA's Technical Committee.

**Jim Hart** has been appointed manager, electronic maintenance, in succession to Roy Sharp who died earlier this year. Hart has been senior supervisor in charge of vision maintenance since joining ITN in 1980.

From BBC-TV studio operations comes **Graham Wilson** to take up an ITN post as supervisory engineer, projects department. Hobbies include badminton - and playing in Pop bands.

Also from the BBC is new ITN project engineer **Michael Steed**. Yet another is **Steve Powell** who comes



Dunn



Hetherington

to Wells Street as deputy shift supervisor, sound maintenance. He once worked as a field seismologist.

**Corinne Hannah**, a former production secretary with BBC's *Newsnight*, has joined ITN as an Aston operator. Former Salisbury art college student **Andrew Nicholson** is a new facilities trainee.

**Tony Griles** joins the company as an electrician. He loves all competitive sports - from fishing to motor racing.

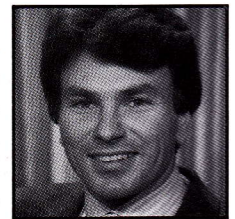
New ITN accounting manager **George Lungley** was previously financial accountant with a light engineering subsidiary of BTR. He plays both hockey and badminton at club level.

**Mike Jesnick** has taken up his ITN post as management accountant. He was formerly with British Telecom. Skiing and board games are among his special interests.

Recently joined ITN expenses clerk **Jenny Block** was with the BBC for eight years. Her prime leisure interest: "following Arsenal round the country".

## Webster's our lad in t'North

Popular news-getter **Mark Webster**, a City/business affairs pundit who handles every type of story with skill and enthusiasm, has said goodbye to Wells Street—



though he threatens to return to his beloved metropolis from time to time.

He has taken on a new role which promises to keep him busy. In typical Webster style he explains:

"Appen I have headed north from whence I'll be covering all that is above Watford Gap. I am, in fact, t'Northern Correspondent - following in the footsteps of such worthies as Martyn Lewis, Ken Rees, Michael MacMillan, Hadrian and the Duke of Cumberland.

"The essence of the job seems to be redistribution of ITN's wealth to end the North-South divide and teaching everyone to talk proper.

"I'm having to live in Manchester, jewel of the northern hemisphere, because the tube service from Notting Hill Gate is a bit too sluggish for your correspondent's needs!"

Len wishes Mark every success in the new job.



# NAO gang sees off Parkin in style

## Lord's lunch crowns a glorious innings

By Arthur Clifford

It had been a flawless innings, spanning decades. Now in the appropriate setting of the Lord's Tavern banqueting suite Leonard Parkin, veteran TV newsman and life-long cricket enthusiast, was set to call it a day.

A little earlier he had delivered his final *News at One* in the sure, unhurried way that marked him as one of the most stylish operators in the game. In signing off, he told his friendly studio interrogator John Suchet of his "immense pride" in being an ITN man. Even on this day he wanted to talk more about ITN than himself. That was well in character, too.

Before the closing credits faded, the telephones were busy with calls from viewers, some in tears, anxious to pay their own tributes to this remarkable communicator. Many could not believe it was all over.

In appraising Parkin's qualities, the cricketing metaphor is difficult to resist. It fits him so well. Since the 1950s he has guided BBC and ITN viewers through the global news scene with the deceptive ease of a Hutton, Miller or Sobers in full flow.

More than 50 ITN folk were gathered in the high-ceilinged room overlooking the Lord's stands. Andrew Tilley was there with the entire NAO gang (soon to become the 12.30 team), plus Stewart Purvis, Norman Rees, ex-NAO chief David Mannion, programme editors, reporters and a wide cross-section of production staff.

For the past 20 years, Parkin has been one of ITN's best known faces; and at this farewell luncheon his features registered a variety of emotions as the anecdotes began to flow.

The formal speeches fully matched the occasion—from the moment the inimitable David Mannion rose to his feet and flourished a large piece of paper headed "Do Parkin speech", but otherwise blank!

Mannion described the guest of honour as "one of the great television professionals of our time—a hundred per center, a true gentleman who would be keenly missed by the entire trade of

journalism."

Norman Rees paid tribute to Parkin's incisive TV reporting from many parts of the world. One into-camera piece which, he said, would always stay in his mind marked the death of one of Europe's legendary figures.



Parkin: that familiar smile

"Leonard stood before the Eiffel Tower and said simply: 'These people are going home tonight to a different France—a France without de Gaulle.'" As Rees put it: "In one sentence, he captured the mood of a nation."

Then he went back to Parkin's time as BBC correspondent in Washington, when it fell to him to inform a stunned Britain that John F. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Rees played the sound tape and the voice of a younger Parkin turned back our thoughts to that fateful, tragic day. It was an eerie moment and Parkin's work was superb.

John Suchet, who was to do a stint on the new 12.30 News before the arrival of Julia Somerville, told the guests that "never once did Leonard lose the friendly authority which made him such a priceless asset to *News at One* and ITN generally." He had, quite simply, been "a friend to millions".

ITN's deputy editor Stewart Purvis gave some telling examples of Parkin's total professionalism over a wide range of stories, and reminded us that he was the only newscaster who had, at some stage, regularly presented all three of ITN's front-line programmes.

Andrew Tilley rounded off the tributes with a sparkling speech listing Parkin's

virtues both as a journalist and a human being. He concluded that with his love of hunting, shooting and fishing and his passion for cricket, no ITN man could be better equipped for retirement—or deserve it more.

We raised our glasses to this well loved man yet again; enjoyed an adroitly edited video of Parkin's screen work; chuckled afresh as he crossed swords with the likes of Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn without losing his cool for a second. And we applauded as he was presented with a beautiful pair of coasters and a tape recorder from his colleagues.

Parkin's response was witty, provocative and touching in turn. It delighted his audience. He did not look or sound nervous, but he sought to convince us that inwardly he was quaking.

"In fact," he intoned solemnly, "I have not felt quite so apprehensive since I found myself standing in the loo of the Savoy Hotel next to pop star Shakin' Stevens!"

Parkin paid tribute to every one of his NAO colleagues, praising their talents, loyalty and commitment. He was proud to be able to claim their friendship over so many years.

One such colleague was lunchtime copytaster Ken Turner. Here Parkin recalled that, though he had tackled most newsroom tasks, he had never been a copytaster. That led him into the tale of the Leeds newspaperman who had spiked the start of the Korean war . . . "Well," he later explained to Parkin in a rich Yorkshire accent, "it seemed such a right long way away!"

When, at the end, Parkin smiled that familiar slow smile, shrugged briefly and sat down, there was an instant of silence. Then table by table the guests stood up, clapping and cheering. It went on for a long time . . .

So, yes, it was a fine party. The old *News at One* crowd—that closely knit news "family" in the ITN basement—had set it up well, with chief sub Gary Mitchell the mastermind behind it all. But as I stepped out of the Lord's Tavern into a wet, blustery July afternoon the feeling of sadness came again.

In a world that grows uglier by the day, Parkin's civilised brand of broadcasting has shone out like a beacon. On his final programme he looked and sounded as good as ever. You can see why people say television has become a crazy business; that you cannot be sure of anything now. For my money, David Mannion got it right. Leonard Parkin will be missed not only on both sides of the television screen, but by the entire world of journalism.

**See next two pages for Parkin profile and more pictures.**



# Parkin: a life of deadlines

MICHAEL JERMEY profiles the ITN veteran who became a "friend to millions"

"I never seriously considered doing anything else. I found I had a facility with words at school, couldn't afford to go to the Bar and so started in journalism. It always seemed inevitable"—so Leonard Parkin recalls the beginning of an illustrious career.

He began in his native Yorkshire on local papers like the Bradford Telegraph and Argus. "They were a very good training ground. They taught you to be first, fast and accurate."

From Yorkshire, Parkin moved to the BBC, working first on Radio Newsreel then the fledgling television news. "That was a real voyage of exploration," he recalls. "We learned as we went along. When ITN arrived it produced a shock to the system—but a highly beneficial one. Television news became more confident, more assertive. We stopped asking deferential questions. We began to probe."

In the late 1950s and early '60s, Parkin travelled widely for the BBC, witnessing events that are now chapters in modern history textbooks. He saw the demise of the French empire in Algeria and the bloody end of Belgian rule in the Congo. And he was at the United Nations on the day Nikita Khrushchev banged his shoe on the table during a Harold Macmillan speech.

Parkin remembers two scoops from those days. The first was being one of only two journalists to witness Donald Campbell crashing during practice for the world land speed record. "It was September 16, 1960. I'll never forget because it was my mother's 60th birthday."

The second was on the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963 when Parkin was resident correspondent in Washington. He was lunching out with colleagues, but an old Bradford newspaper friend, Jack Brooks, then with the Vancouver Sun, had stayed behind at the office to file a story.

When the first agency flash from Dallas dropped, he telephoned Parkin—who shoved a handful of dollar bills into the hands of an astonished waitress and ran from the restaurant. Within minutes he was on the air in Britain, the first to give the appalling news to people outside America.

"But I owed my scoop to Jack," Parkin says with typical generosity. "What a

wonderful gesture of friendship that was. If I've learned one thing in this business it's that you need to keep all the friends you can!"

He arrived at ITN in the late 1960s as News at Ten was establishing itself as the nation's first half-hour TV news. He took his place in a newscasting team which included Reggie Bosanquet, Andrew Gardner and Alastair Burnet.

During this period, Parkin also worked as an ITN reporter on major foreign stories. He produced memorable pieces from the Middle East in the wake of the Six Day War and was in Czechoslovakia at the height of the "Prague Spring" of 1968.

He recalls that the effect on young Czechs "was enormous, for most had never seen a free political meeting in



Such goings on . . . and at Lord's!

their lives." Soon after returning to the NAT desk, he had the sad task of voicing, live, the rushes of Soviet tanks rolling through Prague's streets. "A profoundly depressing experience. Of course, we'd seen it all before in Hungary in 1956."

Parkin talks about his early ITN days with tireless enthusiasm. "There were so many great nights. When a good story broke, a tremendous feeling seemed to run right through the building. With a staff of only about three hundred everyone felt closely involved. There were lots of occasions when no one wanted to go home."

He continued to report from abroad, but increasingly became admired as an ITN newscaster of consummate skill. He will undoubtedly be remembered best by the public as the face and voice of News at One.

A lunchtime bulletin often demands more of a newscaster than any other, and Parkin recalls days when he went into the studio with not a single package yet in the building. The running order was frequently turned on its head while NAO was on-air. On top of that, he had to do hundreds of interviews a year, many of them live.

Yet despite the pressures he always appeared calm and unflappable. He was a hard, probing interviewer but a polite one. He never sought confrontation, never looked for conflict. But when interviewees tried to "mix it", they invariably met their match in Parkin.

His own favourite interview was not with a statesman or great personality, but with the man who dug up the Test wicket at Headingley as part of the "George Davis is innocent" campaign.

He asked the man time and time again why he'd done it. Each time he refused to admit that he had. Then as a final question Parkin asked: "Where did you get the fork?" The man replied: "On the motorway . . . er, hey, you're trying to fit me up." Caught and bowled, Parkin!

After more than twenty happy and fulfilling years at ITN Parkin decided it

was time for a somewhat more restful regime. Five days a week on the lunchtime news hasn't left as much time as he would like for the country pursuits he loves. He intends to go on broadcasting, but at a rather more leisurely pace.

After the announcement of his retirement, hundreds of viewers wrote to express their sadness at his decision. One man even wrote to the IBA saying he should be prevented from leaving ITN.

But perhaps the most eloquent tribute to Parkin was a few words scribbled on his leaving card by a senior journalist in Wells Street who had worked very closely with him over the years.

The message reflected the admiration and affection that colleagues and viewers alike feel for this fine broadcaster. It said simply: "Leonard, I'll miss you greatly and so will my Mum."



## ITN salutes departing veterans



More scenes from that Lord's luncheon



Good wishes at Parkin's boardroom party



Earlier, Deputy Editor Derek Murray bowed out

## MEDIA QUOTES

- "It will be a breakthrough when the news has a grizzled woman reader and a dewy-eyed young male sitting alongside—though I think the whole idea of glamorous news presenters is outdated."—**Julia Somerville**.
- "Can you imagine our women newscasters still being allowed to read the news when they're in their 50s?"—**Muriel Gray**, on TV's Media Show.
- "I really don't like aggro. I'd rather sit down with someone and take them apart in an interview."—TV investigator **Roger Cook**.
- "Nothing is reported verbatim today. What's reported is what a particular reporter would like to have you think was said."—ex-Coal Board chief **Ian McGregor**.
- "The operation was a great success. Unfortunately the patient died."—**Staff reporter** on passing of London Daily News.
- "I haven't looked at television for six years and feel much better, much happier. I believe firmly that it is in the Devil's hands."—**Malcolm Muggeridge**, now 84.
- "The Daily Telegraph understands that what its Home Counties readers really want to read about is sex."—**Jonathan Miller**, in Sunday Times.
- "Have you always been a little on the round side?"—**Debbie Greenwood** to **Cyril Smith**, MP, on BBC-2 show.
- "To be tabloid is not by any means to abandon serious journalism—a good newspaper is a good newspaper whatever its shape."—**Magnus Linklater**, in UKPG.
- "Television is only television. No programme, however fulfilling, should keep us from those who love us best and need us most."—**Jeremy Isaacs**, in farewell speech at Edinburgh TV Festival.
- "To be a video tape editor in broadcast television is one of the most tense and nerve-racking jobs you can imagine."—ACTT general secretary **Alan Sapper**.
- "Political will in relation to television should show as much interest in good television as in cheap television."—**Sir Denis Forman**, giving annual Dimpleby Lecture.
- "We don't do enough to explain stories to people, even the very simple stories."—**Tony Hall**, BBC-TV editor for news and current affairs.
- "In my experience accounts of real authority seldom need trivia to buttress facts."—Tory chairman **Norman Tebbit**.
- "I'm fed up with being famous. I now wish to be immortal."—**Alan Coren**, departing editor of Punch.
- "The editorship of Punch is no joke."—**Dennis Johnson**, in the Guardian.



## Late flash – the FM's having a nightmare!

By Alexandra Kingston

Have you ITN nine-to-six types any idea of the life of a Floor Manager under the late night newflash regime? There's a lot more to it than just waving your arms, you know. Just *how* much you may discover by reading this account of 24 hours in the life of one hard-pressed FM...

**0300:** Small child wakes wanting potty, light conversation and the company of Mother in narrow bed. Kicks like mule, sharp toenails. Eventually nods off. Return to own bed.

**0415:** Dawn chorus. I hate birds. Prevents sleep and wakes cat. Cat peckish. Go downstairs and feed cat. It returns gratefully to bed and purrs Whiskas breath in face.

**0710:** (Presumably) husband leaves home for Something in the City. Does not leave quietly enough. Small child wakes, filthy temper due to restless night. Mother ditto.

**0800:** Child dressed as "fierce Indian warrior" and squaw-Mother patrol garden for buffaloes (snails). Good day —find twenty.

**1000:** Nanny arrives one hour late as had early start yesterday to cover morning newflash standby. Wonder what union she belongs to, longingly. Stagger back to bed.

**1010:** Husband telephones—what a dreadful night, he exhausted. Poor lamb! Office rings—what about a day's overtime, Wednesday? Ha! Office rings again, not Wednesday—Thursday. Still not interested. Milkman arrives, demanding money with

menaces. Hate milkman. Concorde flies over.

**1115:** Bath. Wash hair. Apply Polyfilla. Consider drowning self/child/milkman/cat. Especially cat.

**1200:** Tiny chums arrive for luncheon party. Self to office for union committee meeting. Out of frying pan. Riveting discussion. Speak enthusiastically on subject of extended broadcasting hours.

**1505:** Grab sandwich. Do 545. Stories 1 through 16 become A, B, 1, 4, 4A, 5, 6. Cut the second para and two words out of last sentence of Upsummer, cut 9, drop the Channel 4 trail, Christ put that second para in again, lots of time for the Goodnight.

**1800:** Late night shopping. Manage to find bin liners with handles, paperback copy of Hiawatha, Snail-O-Cide (large) and Dior tights at a *real* discount. Return to office. Suggest other FM might care to collate, staple and address minutes of last Shop meeting. Declines, selfishly. Ring husband. His dinner still in freezer, mine in clingfilm. Grab sandwich. Do *News at Ten*.

**2230:** Return to newsroom. Take call from irate viewer. Agree probably parentage of producer and demand licence number. Sort slides, tidy desk, return to FM office. Form 2% of viewers watching 1934 movie.

**0100:** Wait twenty minutes for cab/ashtray. Co-passenger speaks lengthily on developments in digital cameras. Husband sleeping soundly, cat ditto.

**0220:** Small child wakes...

## MAJOR PRESS OFFICE MOVES



Roberts



Dennis

There have been big changes in Geraldine Sharpe Newton's Press Office team, now settled into new offices at 45 Mortimer Street...

Huw Roberts joined as ITN press officer in August. He comes to Wells Street from Wales where, since 1985, he has directed public affairs and promotional activities at the Welsh Development Agency.

Before that, he served at the Department of Energy as senior press officer and in the Prime Minister's office on secondment. While there, he co-ordinated briefings between Whitehall and political correspondents. Cardiff-born Roberts is 40, married with three children.

Meanwhile, Jill Dennis has been promoted to assistant press officer. She joined ITN in 1985 and since then has taken on an increasing range of PR and promotional responsibilities.

## FIRST STEPS IN TV...



It's autumn and a new group of editorial trainees have arrived. Jonathan Munro, Tess Stimson, Eric MacInnes and John Schofield (from left to right, front to back) form one of ITN's youngest intakes, but they've gained some experiences that should serve them well as budding journalists.

Tess was almost kicked out of college for feeding stories to Fleet Street, while Eric vividly recalls being bullied by Claire Rayner when he thought he was interviewing her. John found working in Hungerford for ITN a rather dramatic introduction to television journalism, while Jonathan is proud of the day his grilling of an Iranian diplomat made not only *News at Ten* but the BBC's *Nine o'clock News* as well.

## Ernie takes to the boat...



After 15 years' dedicated service, stills photographer Ernie Holloway (here being seen off by his colleagues) has left ITN for the Aegean with two Fleet Street chums. They've bought a boat and plan to spend the next three years sailing those sunlit waters and maybe knocking off a pic or two to keep body and soul together. *Lens*, which is going to miss Ernie's sharp, inventive eye, wishes him all happiness.



He once yearned to be a sports scribe, but a spell of political reporting in New South Wales changed all that. Back home he covered more politics for ITV and hosted a new-style radio phone-in. Now he's a key member of ITN's political team...

# How Allen's £10 migrant ticket led to Westminster

By Penny Marshall

As a boy, Peter Allen always wanted to be a sports reporter. After more than a decade of political reporting there are still times when he wonders whether he should have followed his boyhood fixation.

"But politics has remained my first choice because, while it's sometimes tedious, it's always important," he says.

"Sport is fascinating, but essentially trivial. And, of course, it's also a minefield of clichés into which most sports reporters consistently stumble.

"I think in a way it's because many people find politics boring that it's such a challenge. Our job is to bridge the gap between politicians and voters, to illustrate in a way which is relevant and interesting what's happening in Whitehall and Westminster.

"The poll tax is a good example. Most people's eyes glaze over at the very mention of it. It will only excite them when it affects them—by which time it will be too late. Unless, of course, the media does its job properly."

Peter Allen joined a local paper in Basildon straight after his A-levels. "There was never any doubt about what I was going to do. I look back with great nostalgia on that period, although I have vague memories of thinking it tedious at the time.

"It was an extremely good professional experience. I think it's a good idea for everyone to do a stint on a local paper. It teaches you to be accountable for your work. It gives you a sense of responsibility. I'm not sure coming straight into national television is a good idea for anyone."

After completing his indentures on the Bristol Evening Post, Allen and his wife decided a change was in order.

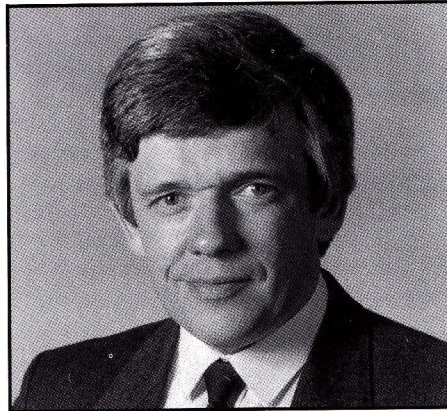
"My wife just went down to Australia House and bought two £10 tickets for Australia: a packaged emigration deal." That was 19 years ago. They stayed there for three years.

"I had no job fixed up when I arrived and was thinking of doing something completely different. But I ended up in a newspaper office looking for work. The editor said: 'You're English—you must know all about parliament!' And that's how my political career started. I covered the New South Wales parliament."

Allen's return to England was not altogether smooth. "I had trouble getting a job and ended up on the Saffron Walden

Weekly News. I thought my world was coming to an end. I had a mortgage, my first child and no better job prospects."

But all that changed when Independent Radio News started up and he went for an interview.



"The place was in chaos. They were interviewing thousands of people and they saw me towards the end of the day. They looked exhausted. I was supposed to read a serious news item as a voice test. But I ad-libbed a funny piece about the stress of interviews. A man walked into the studio laughing and offered me the job.

"It was only then that he asked me what I'd done. When I told him about my political experience in Australia, he said they needed someone to cover Westminster. It was settled there and then."

Allen spent 10 years at LBC, becoming its political editor. He also ran a Sunday morning phone-in which attracted a dedicated audience—and helped to project him further into the centre of national politics.

"Phone-ins have a poor reputation," he says, "because they are full of idiots ringing up. But you can aim it at intelligent people. I asked for specialists to contribute. I didn't want people with opinions—I wanted people with *knowledge*. We had some good moments and some important information came to light during the show."

Next came the job at Granada as their political correspondent. Allen says the move to television seemed logical—"it's the medium with power and impact."

While he was there he made six half-hour current affairs films, an experience

he enjoyed tremendously. He also worked on Granada's Union World. Then, last November, he joined ITN as part of the new-look Brunson team.

"I was used to working fast at IRN and I was used to working with picture at Granada, so I felt relatively well equipped to deal with ITN.

"But there is a problem with political reporting in Britain at the moment. The government's large majority has knocked the steam out of politics a bit. There isn't the fun and games there used to be; not quite the same excitement. For me the election never really came alive.

"I remember covering the vote of confidence in Callaghan in '79. Now that was a night! The vote could have gone either way. You don't get that sort of occasion now."

He says he tries to guard against editorialising by reporting what *other* people think: "But if you don't watch it, a certain amount of editorialising can creep in all too easily. I've found ITN much more rigorous about this than anywhere else I've ever worked. The producers will just not let editorialising through."

Peter Allen clearly loves to be at Westminster and says he's happier following up a story there than being stuck in a studio worrying about the logistics of a package.

He enjoys the responsibility his work at ITN gives him—but he also has a great sense of fun. "Sometimes I like to be outrageous. I used to be on my phone-in. My one regret is that I can never be outrageous here."

## PRESENTING VIOLENCE . . .

The renewed and intensified debate on TV violence in the wake of the Hungerford killings prompted this forthright comment from Alan Protheroe, former Assistant Director General of the BBC:

"That BBC News and ITN regularly succeed in presenting violence without transgressing the bounds of taste and decency (and with only rare failure of judgement) is a tribute to editorial sense and sensibility. There would be less fury if such sensitivity was shown in other sectors of television."



Tasting WI jam in Border's homely Carlisle studio . . . Newscasting for ITN in the wake of the Zeebrugge ferry disaster. In professional terms, the roles are worlds apart. But Fiona Armstrong has made the transition from local to national television news with impressive ease and skill. SIMON MARKS profiles a dedicated journalist who seems as happy in her work as ITN viewers are with her . . .

For Fiona Armstrong, the journey to ITN from Border Television is just the latest move in what seems to have been a lifetime of travelling. She spent the early part of her life in Nigeria, where her father went out to work, first for the British Council and then as a university lecturer.

When she was thirteen, her family returned to Britain and she completed her education in Preston. She thought she wanted to be an actress, and indeed often appeared on the boards as a member of the National Youth theatre. But after passing her A-levels she listened to her parents' advice—and came to London to study for a German degree at University College.

It was at University that her interest in journalism took root. She did some work for a hospital radio station, and went on to become editor of the London-wide student newspaper, "Sennet". Thus she followed in the footsteps of two other undergraduates who went on to make names for themselves—Sarah Cullen and Jean Rook.

Fiona duly graduated from London University and was offered a job at the Independent Local Radio station serving the Thames Valley area, Radio 210. "It was a great training ground," she recalls. It was through 210 that she attended the National Broadcasting School. After two years with the station she joined BBC Television in Manchester as an "RJ"—a regional journalist.

It was, she says, a "tremendous experience", though she doesn't pretend she enjoyed every minute of it. "Senior editors were constantly taking what you'd written and ripping it up—but that, of course, was the way you learned!"

While at the BBC, Fiona decided that what she really wanted to do was to report and present. She wasted no time. She applied for a job at Border Television in Carlisle, and soon she was travelling again, this time to the Cumbrian Hills and to professional territory that was new to her—Independent Television.

Fiona speaks of her work at Border with undisguised affection. "It was a

happy time and an incredibly busy one. It was such a small team that everyone had a chance to tackle every job going."

She soon found the presenter's role very much to her liking, but it certainly kept her on her toes. "One minute you'd be introducing the main Border story of the day . . . the next you'd be at the other end of the studio tasting jam, or talking about animals—or perhaps to them!"

For a presenter, of course, Border's local news magazine meant a very different image to that of an ITN newscaster. "You were encouraged to develop an on-screen personality—something that the viewer could identify with and remember."



The offer of work at ITN came as a surprise to Fiona. But soon she was on the road to London. She arrived in Wells Street on February 9, and was looking forward to a few weeks' relaxed introduction into the techniques of our newsroom operation.

On Friday, March 6, that process ended abruptly. The Zeebrugge ferry disaster meant that she had to be pitched into the world of networked television almost without warning. She read ITN's bulletins on the Saturday and Sunday and says she never had time even to think about being nervous. "What impressed me most was that everyone knew exactly what part they had to play."

By common consent, Fiona's screen debut was a tremendous success.

Naturally, she is pleased about that. But she takes nothing for granted and her approach to news broadcasting remains an intensely serious one. When she thinks about her appearances now, and compares them with those at Border TV, she says she feels a great responsibility.

She explains: "It's certainly more frightening, because you are informing people about events of national and global importance. Except for a smile at the end of the bulletin, you cannot afford to let your personality intrude on those events." On the question of appearing before millions of people instead of hundreds of thousands, she is characteristically cool. "One camera is like another . . . you don't have a chance to think about the size of the audience."

Fiona always seems to be busy. As well as her reporting and newscasting for ITN's mainstream programmes, she is also known to younger viewers as the presenter of ITN's segment within the Saturday morning "Get Fresh". But if she's busy within ITN House, her life seems to become even more hectic outside.

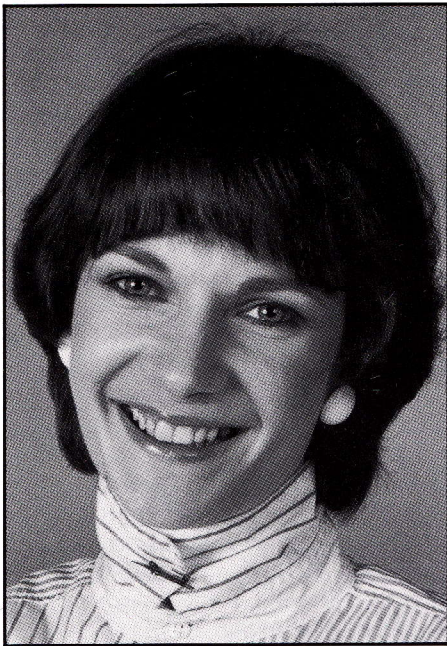
"I've been spending as much of my time off as I can in Cumbria. I've always been a keen walker and swimmer, now I've taken up fishing." So, waders on, she can often be seen fly fishing in those fine northern streams; and had been invited to collaborate in a TV Times feature about trout farming.

She confessed that her other hobbies were "cooking and eating" and that she planned to be adequately equipped to enjoy both in her new London flat—an abode acquired despite her initial shock at the capital's property prices.

Fiona's busy autumn included marriage to businessman Rodney Potts whom she met in her Border TV days. But it's clear that this happy event has in no way diminished her commitment to ITN.

I asked what she hoped to be doing in ten years' time. "reporting and presenting," she replied, clearly emphasising the importance to her of both roles.





# ... and how Sue became the TV toast of Dubai

If a jittery BBC *"Breakfast Time"* had not axed the newsreader's role, this versatile lady might not be working in Wells Street today. The loss is certainly the Beeb's for she has proved a major asset to ITN's growing family. In this second profile, Simon Marks talks to newscaster Sue Carpenter whose TV news career began in the United Arab Emirates.

Sue Carpenter received a Christmas present with a difference last December 24. Through the mail came an ITN contract offering her work on what was then a fresh concept in television journalism—ITN's *World News* on Super Channel.

That pioneering cross-frontier programme is now an integral part of the ITN system, and Sue herself is just as firmly established in the Wells Street family.

Super Channel News gave her the chance to present not only general news, but also sport and weather. But just a few years ago, Sue was not working in television. In fact, she wasn't even thinking about a career in journalism...

She grew up in London, then went to university to study for her BA in English literature and language to 1640. A budding young actress, she ran the university theatre workshop; but decided, in the end, to stay with literature and read for her Master's degree in English, this time specialising in Old Norse and paleography. A far cry from space age television!

After leaving university she went out to work as an English teacher in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. But her career as an educator was destined to be short-lived.

Watching the news on Abu Dhabi television one day, she remarked to a friend that anyone could present the programme better than the lady who had the job. Soon she found herself auditioning at the station—and then, with startling rapidity, transferred to the other side of the magic box.

"The Abu Dhabi newsroom was run by a couple of Englishmen, one of whom was usually drunk," Sue recalls. She stayed six months before being poached by the rival television station in Dubai.

There she wrote and read a nightly half-hour bulletin.

"The first ten minutes was a summary of local news. That normally meant detailing the endless meetings the sheikhs had with each other. The only problem was that all the film was mute, because the sheikhs didn't want their asides to be broadcast. Our sound engineers used to cover the pictures with music—usually The Grimethorpe Colliery Band plays the Beatles!"

But in Dubai, Sue often found herself presenting major world stories as well. "I was there when Israel invaded the Lebanon and we regularly extended the bulletin. But the news had a strong Arab slant. I tended to write the world news segment to get away from the censorship."

It was all very different from ITN. One night, she had to read the list of names of people who attended a State funeral. It took 25 minutes! But, she remembers, there was one big advantage: "In Dubai, we were world famous."

After a year, a now homesick Sue Carpenter decided to return to Britain. A submitted tape of her work to the BBC led to an audition and then a summer working for various regional programmes. In the autumn she was offered a two-year contract to present "Points West" at BBC Bristol.

In 1983, breakfast TV came to Britain's screens. The BBC were first off the mark and Sue was recruited to present the *South East News* and weather section of the programme. Thus began one of the most exhausting periods of her life.

Each day, after finishing her BBC *"Breakfast Time"* shift, she would drive to Bristol to present the evening edition of *"Points West"*. Then it was back up the M4 to London in time for the following morning's programme. "I did that for six months, and I reckon I now know every single bump on that motorway."

When the national *"Breakfast Time"* newsreader decided to move on to fresh pastures, Sue was asked to take over as the main news presenter. The post also involved reading the *"News After Noon"* three times a week. She loved working for the original *"Breakfast Time"*, mostly because it was a genuine team effort and they all got on so well.

But soon clouds began to darken the *"Breakfast Time"* horizon. The programme found itself losing the ratings war to TV-am and *"Good Morning Britain"*.

New ideas swirling through the BBC began to affect both the show and its staff. It was decided that the main presenters of *"Breakfast Time"* should also read their own news, so the job of newsreader would no longer exist. Sue began to look for other openings both inside and outside the BBC. The rest, as they say, is history.

Among her interests outside TV journalism, she readily admits to being a "frustrated racing driver". In fact, her Super Channel colleague David Cass has dubbed her the "Grand Prix groupie" because she spends so much time watching her favourite sport.

She lives with Sheba, her pet labrador acquired from Battersea Dogs' Home. Her other leisure pursuits include both theatre and cinema; and in her more energetic moods she'll admit to doing some aerobics.

The wonder is that she finds time even for a few sit-ups. Since that ITN contract arrived with the Christmas Eve cards, it has been a year of non-stop action for Sue Carpenter.

She's a lady with energy, enthusiasm and total commitment. It was a happy chain of events that took her from a TV presenter's desk in sun-baked Dubai to the high-tech newsrooms of Wells Street.



# Imagination—ITN's secret weapon in graphics war

**What advances are ITN viewers likely to see in computer graphics as we move towards the 1990s? Our manager of computing and graphics has a clear vision of the future—and it's an exciting one. MICHAEL JERMEY sat with Chris Long as he schemed and dreamed in his cluttered Mortimer Street office.**

In a small, brightly-lit office in Mortimer Street, Chris Long is planning a revolution. Surrounded by piles of computing books and magazines and aided by an Apple Mac computer and a vivid imagination, he is determining the shape and style of our computer graphics in the 1990s.

If ITN's staff and viewers have been impressed by what Paintbox and VT80 have enabled graphic designers to do in the 1980s, they should brace themselves for what Long and his team have in store for the coming decade.

Long has been Manager of Computing and Graphics for the past two years. He joined ITN in 1979 to help develop VT80. Before that he had spent seven years with the BBC setting up computer systems for Current Affairs, including the Beeb's election coverage.

This quiet revolutionary has a clear vision of computer graphics growing ever more flexible and realistic.

"In the last seven years," he explains, "we have seen an extraordinarily rapid transition from conventional graphics to an entirely computerised system. There is no reason why technology should not go on providing more and more flexible tools for the graphic designer.

"In three or four years' time our graphics will look much more three-dimensional, giving a far greater impression of depth than they do at present."

The other advance that Long sees on the near horizon is increased realism. Not only will graphics appear to have that third dimension, but graphics sequences will also look more like video than they do today.

As news moves towards being able to produce such realism, he recognises that ethical considerations will arise. The words "ITN reconstruction" may well one day have to appear over our graphics so they are not confused with real video.

"Up to now, the great difference between commercial computer graphics and graphics for news has been the immediacy of news," says Long.

"A title sequence like that for Channel Four News is composed of 25 separate

computer generated pictures a second. The computer can take minutes, or even hours, to create just the one image. An entire sequence can take days. It's clear then that such a system would be impossible for day to day use in news.

"Up to now we've used VT80. It has had the enormous advantage of producing real time animation—but you don't get something for nothing, for there is



trade-off between the capacity for animation and picture quality.

"What's so exciting about the world we are about to enter is that for the first time we'll be able to combine real time animation and realistic images."

ITN has spent nearly £250,000 on a brand new system called Meiko. It is as quick as VT80 but provides much more realistic images; and its incredible computing power allows it to create complex and aesthetically pleasing pictures in a very short period of time.

Long is cautious about saying what Meiko will be able to do when it's up and running. "It's difficult at this stage to predict that it will be able to produce this or that. Our views are inevitably tempered by what we've seen other people do with it. The real challenge will come when we start to push the machine beyond what we conventionally think computer graphics can do today."

It was a similar situation, he recalls, in the early days of VT80. "When we started we had no idea that we'd be able to achieve the sort of things we now do in bulletins almost as a matter of

course." Long jokes: "I don't expect viewers suddenly to sit up and say 'Gosh, look. ITN's bought a Meiko!' But they *will* notice the advance. Its introduction will herald the end for VT80."

And as with VT80 in its time, ITN graphic designers and journalists alike will have to learn what Meiko can offer. "We will only really be able to explain by example," Long says. "Most technological advances are not produced by consumer demand, but rather create their own demand. Look at the history of Paintbox. There was no clamour for it from graphic artists, but today no one would dream of being without it. Meiko,

I suspect, will be the same. Its capabilities will produce a demand."

The technology behind computer graphics is clearly growing more and more sophisticated. Ironically, though, Long believes that future competition between ITN and the BBC in the graphics field will rely less on technology and more on imagination.

For the BBC have also bought Meiko, and so the real test will be who puts it to better use. Long is confident that ITN will win that contest.

He goes on: "With VT80, we're well ahead of the BBC using seven year old technology. You have to ask why others aren't beating us with newer technology.

"I think the answer is that ITN has scored because of a total commitment to its use and imagination in its operation. Even with both the BBC and ourselves using the new Meiko, I'm sure they can be consistently beaten—because on past form we will use that new technology more effectively."

Indeed, Chris Long concluded, if ITN is to stay ahead, we must make absolutely certain that we do so.



If ever a television journalist had a hectic start to an ITN career it was former BBC sports specialist Mark Austin. In fact, it was months before he spent a working day in Wells Street. But JUDY ASLETT finally caught up with the genial giant who has proved not only a fine ITN sports reporter but a redoubtable all-rounder, too . . .

Mark Austin recalls that the first person he met when he joined ITN was Mike Nolan. It was an encounter he is unlikely to forget.

"We were at Heathrow, ready to fly out to Australia. Mike shook my hand and said, 'You don't know me and I don't know you. But I'll tell you one thing—I can make you or break you.' What an introduction!"

In the next four months, Mark Austin covered the World Series cricket, the Wright MI5 hearings and the America's Cup—all before he'd worked a day in Wells Street.

"It was strange being out in the field and speaking every day to people I'd never met. I was asked to join ITN specifically to cover the World Series so I always knew that would happen. But it was still odd."

Once back in London, it didn't take Austin long to fit in. ITN's sports department is a closely knit group and its latest recruit had the lively personality and sense of humour which, I'm assured, is essential to good sports reporting.

He also showed an impressive capacity for hard work. That must have helped in Australia when he was being driven relentlessly by the man he calls the best foreign fixer he's ever met—Mike Nolan.

"We'd never have been able to do as much work out there if it hadn't been for Mike. He'd hire boats and planes at the drop of a hat. That's what really made the trip work."

One such escapade was the quest to interview Chris Dickson, skipper of the New Zealand yacht. Despite doing well in Freemantle, Dickson had decided not to give any interviews, but no ITN team would dream of giving up that easily.

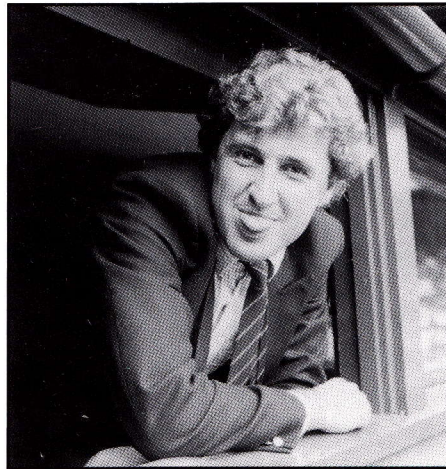
Austin and Nolan hired a boat at a hundred dollars an hour, resolved to go alongside the Kiwis during training, jump aboard and demand an exclusive interview. After a five-hour sea chase, Austin finally caught up—only to find it was Dickson's day off and he was back ashore!

But that was a minor setback. The Australian assignment was a great success. Austin often had two reports in the day's ITN bulletins—holding his own not only with the sporting news but also the "Spycatcher" case.

# Austin's deep end debut Down Under!

In fact the MI5 saga could easily have been a full-time job. It's much to Austin's credit that the foreign desk left it to him.

He went into journalism after leaving school at 17—"Why go to university when you already know what you want to do?" He worked on local papers, the BBC World Service and as a BBC general reporter. He reckons that varied background not only made life more interesting, but has also made him a better sports journalist.



Austin . . . "an impish streak"

"I think it's important not to get labelled simply as a sports reporter," he says. "After all, I'm here to present the news. Take what happened at Egbaston earlier this year. The story of the day was about the worst violence seen on a cricket ground in this country. We covered it; BBC sport did not."

Austin is the first to admit he's no sports "memory man", so don't bother to ask him who won the Cup in 1958. But he does play a little himself. Cricket, rugby and tennis are his favourites, but his heavy reporting schedule leaves little time to indulge nowadays.

The trick of covering sport, he says with mock solemnity, is to make sure you're in a hot country at all times. The man with the permanent suntan told me that when I tracked him down at Wimbledon, catching him between bulletins amidst the strawberries and cream.

It was a gloriously sunny day but not,

I felt, hot enough to start stripping off. Knowing of Austin's impish streak, someone had told him Lens would want to know full details of his love life, how much he earned and the colour of his underpants.

Of course, no one working for Lens would dream of asking such questions. But I can reveal that Austin would happily work for ITN for somewhat less than he gets—and on this occasion was wearing white underpants printed with Easter eggs and bunnies!

The future for Austin may well lie in ITN's general newsroom as well as in the sports department. He much admires the work of Jeremy Thompson who, he says, has blazed a trail for sports reporters keen to branch out.

He adds: "I'd really love to do what Jeremy does and work in general news abroad—not based in one spot like most correspondents, but following particular stories around the world."

But he is in no hurry to move, and sitting back in his chair in the Wimbledon sunshine that day he had the air of a man who is perfectly content.

It's clear that he enjoys both the job itself and also the dedicated sportsmen and women he meets in the course of it—most of them, anyway.

"Sports people do take some understanding," Mark Austin admits. "Someone who picks up a tennis racquet at the age of four and never puts it down again lives, eats and breathes sport. As a reporter you have to try to understand such total commitment.

"But I like it. In fact, I find it's infectious. The enthusiasm certainly rubs off."

## OPT-OUT . . .

When the start of a classic race at the Curragh was delayed for nearly an hour because of a bomb warning, the fast-talking Irish TV commentator rose to the occasion with alacrity . . .

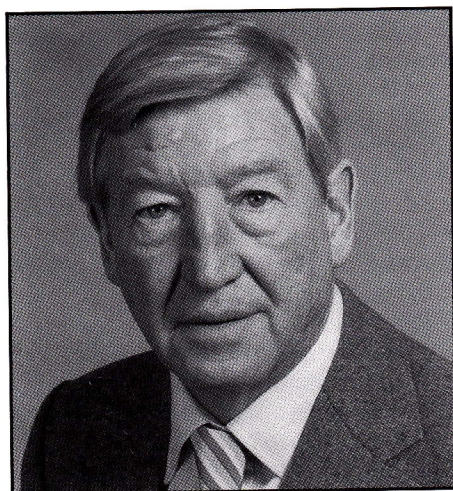
"Let's hope," he said, "that this doesn't turn out to be just another hoax."



# Gall's gang takes on Cairngorms to aid students

A sponsored trek through the Cairngorms, organised by newscaster Sandy Gall to raise funds for students, drew enthusiastic support from his ITN colleagues this summer.

The 20-mile hike in July across peat bogs, streams and boulder-strewn slopes was completed by a posse of ITN stalwarts including editor David Nicholas, Alastair Stewart, Fiona Armstrong, Mike Nicholson, Sue Tinson, Laura



Gall: "Tireless"

Lebetkin and, of course, the rugged Gall himself.

Sir Alastair Burnet was right behind the venture, too. But, alas, he had a bad leg and had to go ahead to the finishing point by helicopter. That's what the Scottish papers said, anyway!

The hill walkers—who included sponsored students and academic staff—were out to help raise £250,000 for the TV studies course at Aberdeen University.

Aberdeen Press and Journal reporter Sandy Bremner went along with his notebook and turned in a colourful, at times richly humorous, account of the day...

He described Alastair Stewart as "resplendent in a slinky black tracksuit, gulping in lungfuls of mountain air and performing most impressively"—also telling anyone who would listen how ferociously he had trained for the event.

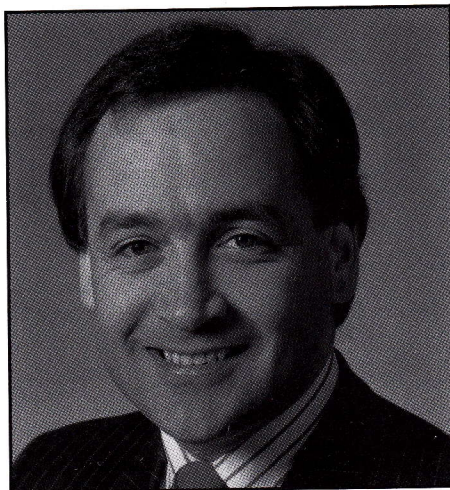
Meanwhile, a tireless Sandy Gall "fairly gobbled up the miles with great strides", constantly checking that the students were in good shape, asking about their studies, chatting about

everything from sport to the politics of Afghanistan.

At one point, a girl student in Fiona Armstrong's group tripped and used the Press and Journal man to break her fall. "Sorry," gasped the girl, "but when I go down I always take someone with me."

Declared Fiona loyally: "It's certainly not like that at ITN!"

For most, it proved tough going in a good cause. In fact some of the



Stewart: "Impressive"

dishevelled walkers feared they were hallucinating when, four miles from home, they thought they spotted Sir Alastair standing under a tree, immaculate in well-cut suit and polished shoes.

It was no dream. "My leg was feeling better so I decided to walk out," he explained. He glanced down at his suit almost apologetically. "One couldn't let the side down."

The last stragglers came in and soon the hotel lounge bar was full of tired but happy travellers "swapping stories and smiling the quiet contented smiles of achievement."

And Sandy Bremner concluded his piece: "Today I saw ITN's newscasters as never before."

## REGIONAL RESCUE

**Please remember that for future issues Lens would appreciate not only your letters but your articles, too. ITN's staff newspaper should not have to look to outside sources for accounts like the one above. Our thanks to the Press and Journal.**

## Data Protection—a reminder

By Laura Dugdale

The subject access provisions of the Data Protection Act come into force on 11th November. From this date onwards, any individual (on payment of £10 fee) may apply to find out what data about them is stored and processed automatically on a computer by reference to their name.

ITN's policy, and indeed a legal necessity, is to be as helpful as possible to persons requiring access to their personal data. From 11th November, any requests received in any form by any employee should be referred immediately to the Data Protection co-ordinator, Chris Long. The name and address of the requesters and any other details must be obtained.

Once satisfied with the identity of the inquirer and on receipt of the £10 fee, ITN has 40 days in which to comply with the request.

ITN has made seven registrations under the Data Protection Act. They cover the Personnel department micro, the Library micro used for mailing and invoicing, the Accounts system, the Travel department cab system, the Production Office micro, the Film Library index and the Newsroom system.

Clearly, some members of staff are more at risk of falling foul of the law than others. Any member of staff who is worried about the operation of the law should contact me for guidance.

To the best of our knowledge, ITN has registered all the present computer operations that come within the scope of the law. However, ITN is *not* registered for any *private* purposes that an ITN computer, such as the Newsroom system, may be being used for. This illegal use is the individual's responsibility and not ITN's.

All members of staff should be aware that they are personally responsible for registering themselves as a Data User for any private collections of personal data that they hold, irrespective of who owns the computer. Don't forget that even your home computer (unless used only for the most basic domestic purposes) is also covered by this Act.

The penalties for not complying with the Act can be serious, such as a £2,000 fine and, in extreme circumstances, use of the computer can be totally prohibited.



# Super Channel News scores with Sri Lanka exclusive

Super Channel News is showing its capacity not only to package a first-class service for Europe and other parts of the world—but also to *originate* major stories both for its own programme and ITN's other bulletins.

In July, SC News scored an impressive exclusive with its investigation of a Sri Lankan television report on the guerrilla war in that troubled land.

(It was screened only weeks before the peace accord signed between Delhi and Colombo which aimed to end the war by creating provincial governments for Sri Lanka's Tamil-dominated areas in the north and east of the island.)

The report included film taken by security forces following an attack on Tamil rebels. Close scrutiny of the film by Super Channel News revealed that at least two of the Tamil dead were children, and that a third (possibly their mother) was also pregnant.

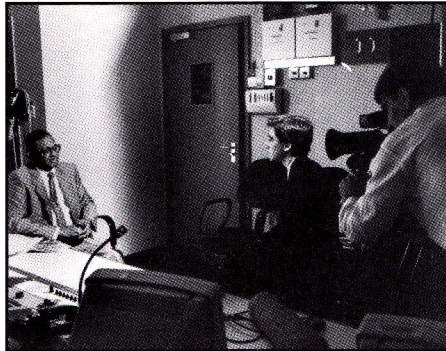
The Sri Lankan High Commissioner in London was invited by SC News to see the pictures for himself. Afterwards, in an exclusive interview with Simon Marks, he admitted that young children—girls as well as boys—*were* being killed by members of his country's security forces.

But the High Commissioner, Mr Chandra Monerawela, claimed that the Tamil guerrillas had been training young children as terrorists.

"It is unfortunate," he added, "but youngsters have been trained in this way. The ages of these particular young Tamils are difficult to determine from the pictures."

Mr Nadesan Satyendra, Convenor of Tamil International, strongly denied that

Tamils had ever trained children as terrorists. He told Super Channel News that to the Sri Lankan army "every Tamil was a terrorist".



Marks quizzes High Commissioner



Tamil official views SCN report

The Sri Lankan story was a highlight of that edition of SC News—and the same night's News at Ten ran the exclusive at about one and a half minutes.

It was an encouraging demonstration of the satellite programme's ability now to initiate news just as effectively as ITN's domestic newscasts.

## Where the letters pour in . . .

Spectator editor Charles Moore wrote in his magazine's diary column recently:

"For the first time in many years, we publish two and a half pages of letters this week. We now get far more letters than before, and of high quality."

Mr Moore went on to apologise to his readers for failing to match their courtesy in writing letters for publication by acknowledging them. He pleaded shortage of staff.

It would be a memorable day if Lens magazine ever had to confess to such a lapse.

In the summer of 1986, when Lens acquired a new editor, Arthur Clifford said in a front cover editorial: "Lens ought to possess one of the liveliest letters pages in the house journal business. In future I would like to run a full page or more of letters in each issue."

Ah, well!

## The day young Clifford made it at the Beeb

*Geraldine Sharpe Newton writes:* The BBC has named a new Controller of Editorial Policy. His job is to make sure the BBC is not embarrassed or surprised by any of its programmes. We were discussing this role of the guardian of the truth, the watchdog of mistakes, when Arthur Clifford told us a tale about his early days at the Beeb.

Arthur was a very young man, just starting out as a radio news writer. He was preparing a story for the 6pm bulletin about a small boy being found safe after wandering lost on Dartmoor.

When he presented his script, the duty editor jabbed a finger at a sentence which read: "The boy's clothes were torn and his knees were grubby." He frowned. "Don't know about the word 'grubby', Arthur. May not be right for our people. Not the kind of word we normally use. You'd better go see the Director of the Spoken Word. See what he thinks."

Arthur did. He found the office, knocked on the door, introduced himself and explained. The Director of the Spoken Word held out his hand for the script. He read it carefully, then gave his verdict. "In this context," he said gravely, "I find the word 'grubby' acceptable. You may go ahead, Mr Clifford."

As Arthur turned to leave, the BBC grandee patted him on the shoulder and added: "Come back any time and, please, don't feel you have to address me as Director of the Spoken Word. In future, you may call me DSW."

## Down to earth

In this television space age, when ITN's nightly satellite broadcasts to Europe and beyond are routine, perhaps it does no harm now and then to be brought down to earth with a hefty bump . . .

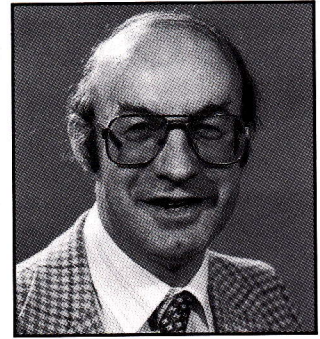
"Sorry to trouble you," said the lady who telephoned the Press Office, "but I wonder if you could tell me how far ITN reaches?"

"What do you mean exactly?" asked the Press Office.

"Well, does it reach as far as Manchester?"



Members of the House of Lords turned TV programme makers this summer when three peers each presented an edition of ITN's "Their Lordships' House" which regularly attracts an audience of around half a million viewers. Programme editor HOWARD ANDERSON (right) describes how, with some adroit manipulation behind the scenes, a bold idea was steered to success . . .



## DIY peers present a lordly view of life

Like all the best ideas, it started in the bar – appropriately enough the House of Lords bar. It had another great virtue. If it worked, I could take all the credit as Programme Editor; if it didn't I could blame Peter Allen who first suggested it. I'm still not sure, so I'll declare it a success and take the resulting brownie points.

Their Lordships weren't quite sure what to think about presenting the programme themselves. Generally they liked it. They reckoned they knew far more about what was going on than we did, so why shouldn't they do the job?

But a few thoughts were clear. They were most interested in who we chose. They wanted to make certain the would-be presenters were "working peers", members who turned up day in and day out, taking part in debates and doing their bit in the votes. No backwoodsmen or glory-seekers here.

The first hurdle was the House Broadcasting Committee. A raised eyebrow here, the odd query there. Problem overcome by a master stroke. The Liberal we had chosen was Lord Winstanley, a former MP and practised broadcaster with his own programme on Granada. He was a member of the Broadcasting Committee and a word in the right quarters saved the day.

I would dearly love to say it was a planned master stroke – but his Lordship's timely reminder of his status came as a complete and welcome surprise.

The next hurdle was put up by Mrs Thatcher. Because of some election or other, she reshuffled her government. One of her new brooms was Baroness Hooper, a delightful lady who just happened to be our Conservative nominee. Could she be persuaded to stand firm? Possibly, but her civil servants definitely couldn't so a substitute was sought rapidly.

We were very fortunate – Baroness Young, a highly articulate Foreign Office minister had given up her portfolio; she was a great supporter of televising the Lords and only too anxious to help.

Baroness Young, in fact, set the experiment in motion.

Her trial run with autocue was terrifying. She managed it with so much ease that we started wondering why there was so much fuss about this newscasting business. She spent the day with us and joined in with gusto, cursing the computer, watching ITV in the crewroom during the supper break, munching through the inevitable, inedible sandwich.

The third and last guest presenter was Baroness Ewart-Biggs whose languid and laid-back manner disguised rather a detailed knowledge of the way the Lords works.

Had we thought of doing something on that boring looking Northern Ireland order? No, we hadn't. Did we realise that it involved the complete budget for the province? Er . . . actually no, we didn't. And by the way did we know her honourable friend Lord So-and-so was



Baroness Ewart-Biggs, Lord Winstanley, Baroness Young

When it came to approaching Lord Houghton about his abortion bill manoeuvres, there was none of the deferential "Excuse me, sir, would you mind explaining . . ." Instead it was straight in: "Now then, Douglas, what's all this about?" Hacks watched open-mouthed.

The only problem came when a junior minister made a conspicuous hash of question-time. "He was perfectly awful but I do have to see the chap over dinner now and then." A quick conflagration and a suitable code was dreamed up.

Next on stage Lord Winstanley. As he himself pointed out, he had done rather more television than most of us . . . and as for that autocue business, it was a sure way of achieving mediocrity.

No, he didn't need practice and, yes, he did do it all in one take including VT runs and exactly to time. And that was with a two-hour supper break and writing his own script.

intending to say this, that and the other in debate? Well, not really . . .

To cap it, the government chose that day to make a statement about the prison population – prisons being one of Baroness Ewart-Biggs' specialist subjects.

One minute after the statement finished, the minister was signed up for an interview. He might say "No" to Howard Anderson; he could hardly refuse Lady Ewart-Biggs.

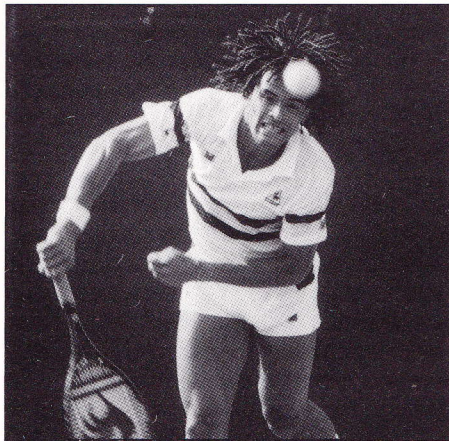
At the end, we all enjoyed it. The lords and ladies concerned seemed to enjoy it, too.

And the viewers? Well, at least, one Baptist minister from Aberdeen wrote to say he enjoyed it so it can't have been all bad. Yes, we made mistakes and we would do it slightly differently next time (lords do *not* read headlines).

All in all, though, the lordly view of life isn't so different from that of a Wells Street scribe. But don't tell it on the Woolsack.



# Lensman Curtis honoured for Wimbledon "ace"



The award-winning shot



The presentation

ITN stills man John Curtis brought great credit on himself and his company by collecting a top prize in this summer's Kodak and Nikon photographic competitions, based on the All England Championships at Wimbledon.

The contests were open to all accredited professional photographers attending Wimbledon who are normally resident in the UK, and they attracted many of the finest operators in the game.

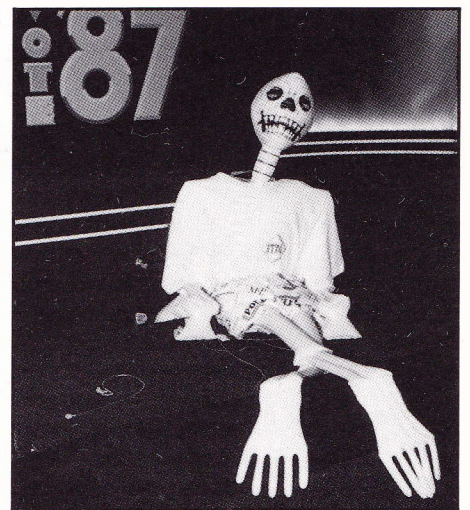
John Curtis entered the Kodak competition for the colour shot which "best reflected the spirit of the Wimbledon Championships."

And for this beautifully timed and highly attention grabbing photograph he picked up a "Highly Commended" prize of £200, plus a pair of 7 x 50 Nikon binoculars.

John received his prize from TV commentator and Wimbledon personality Gerry Williams at a ceremony in the London Press Centre.

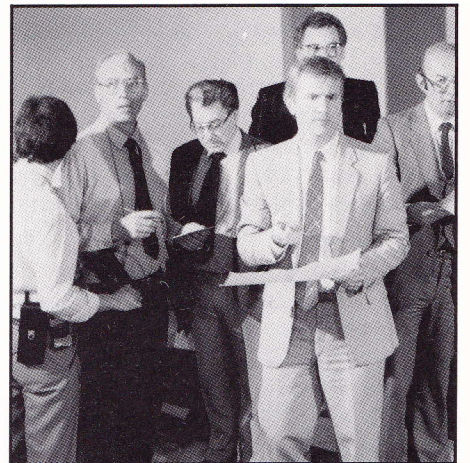
Other prize winners included Ian Stewart of The Times, John Dawes of the Daily Star in Manchester, and Bob Dear of the Associated Press.

"I'm bone-weary, mate!"

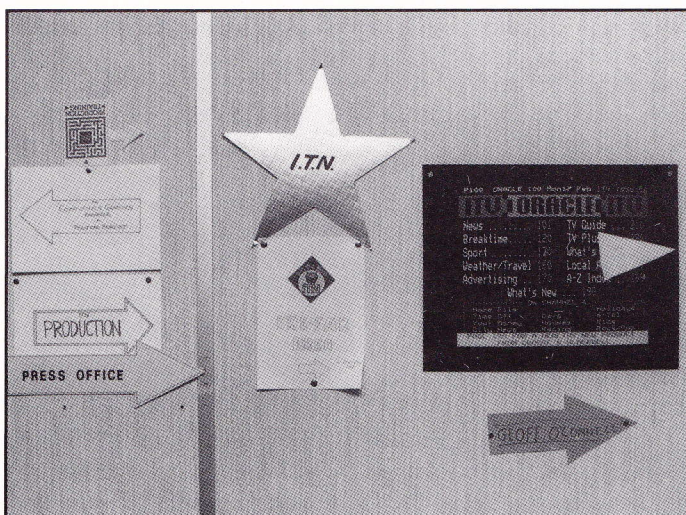


"ITN is never better than when it is under pressure. That was certainly true of election month."— David Nicholas in July Lens.

Singalong with C4N ...



The Channel Four News election debate team limbers up for what surely must be the next Eurovision Song Contest.



The first floor corridor at 45 Mortimer Street ... crossroads of ITN's high-tech world of the 1980s. All ITN needs now, Lens suggests, is a high-tech signwriter!



...But at least those signs work, and the Lens photographer duly located Peter Hall's hard-working Oracle team, now happily installed in their new ops room.



# 'Artful' Dove lifts the Brennan Bowl

By Brian Pendry

The Cuddington (Brennan Bowl) meeting took place on Thursday, June 25, after being postponed from earlier in the month because of a minor event elsewhere. The May meeting at Cottesmore had also been put back to August 3.

With such a long lay-off, one or two members were feeling a little rusty if not somewhat jaded after the exertions of the previous few weeks.

As usual, a morning nine-hole competition was arranged, dovetailing with an 18-hole competition being played by another Society. Two of our own members, cousins Derek Seymour and Martyn Pedrick, played for the "Red Lion" in the morning and for the ITN Golfing Society in the afternoon.

What gluttons for punishment they are. Anyway, it made no difference - they did not win a prize in either competition!



Dove with Denis Brennan

In the morning the honours went to Brian Edmonton who scored 16 points, with the ever-present Peter Wicking putting a spark back into his game, second on 15 points. The guest prize was won by Robin Pym on 17 points.

The afternoon competition was a case of dodging the showers and only the most artful golfer was likely to win. So it proved to be as Roger Dove, making a fairly rare appearance these days, scored a very creditable 38 points to take the Brennan Bowl.

Geoff Moyses (nice to see him on course again) came second with 34 points and John Ford took third place with 32 points. The guest competition was won by Walter Reid with 38 points. Second was Ian McKenzie with 30 points.

At dinner, Vice-Captain Brian Pendry thanked sponsor Denis Brennan, of Location Lighting, for his continued support and welcomed the Society's new President, Wally Moss, who recently succeeded Jack Chatterton.

## East Herts meeting

The weather for the East Herts (Redburn Bowl) meeting on Friday, July 10, lived up to Captain John Copleston's start-of-season promise with glorious sunshine, although perhaps less of a breeze would have made the day perfect.

Peter Sadler, formerly of the Labs at ITN, came to the rescue of those wilting in the heat, dispensing drinks from his tricycle like a "Stop Me and Buy One" ice-cream man. His efforts were rewarded with more than goodwill when he took the Redburn Bowl with 36 points.

Brian Edmonton performed his usual feat of consistency, coming in second with a net 33 points and John Gallagher bared his knees in the sun to good effect to take third place. (At least I think they were knees!)

For the guests, Hud Adams - who took up the game only six months ago - walked away with the first prize, scoring 41 points, followed by Russell Hilliard who, under the watchful eye of father Pat, returned a solid 36 points.

After an excellent dinner, the Captain paid tribute to Bob Redburn's long and generous record of sponsorship and thanked Stan and Molly Crockett (his playing partner) for the local knowledge and encouragement which had helped him to drive as far as the ladies' tees on most holes!

The day ended with a ball-draw and, with the numbers reduced because of Election-delayed holidays, everybody wound up, like the runners in the Caucas race, with a prize of some sort.

## THE LENS

... welcomes your articles, letters, anecdotes, sports reports and pictures. All contributions, please, to ITN Press Office, 45 Mortimer Street.

## Athletics

# Evergreen Hickey has a field day at Cosford

Video editor, Gordon Hickey, now 53, once again shrugged off the years when he competed in the 1987 National Indoor Veteran Championships at RAF Cosford.

He contested the pentathlon, shot putt and high jump. And, true to form, the irrepressible ITN giant (he's 6ft 5ins, weighs 16 stones) came away with a fistful of honours.



Long day . . . long jump

His day began with the 60m hurdles at 10am, and at 6.30pm he was still high jumping in a tie-break. In between, Hickey had the long jump, shot and track events in the pentathlon and the shot individual event.

He finally won the high jump with a leap of 1.57m. He was second in the individual shot putt with a throw of 12.20m and third in the pentathlon with 1,900 points.

Lens asked Hickey to sum up the day. "It was pretty tough," he grinned. "Almost as hard as cutting a Sandy Gall story!"

After working in a film lab, Hickey came to ITN in the late 1950s as an assistant film editor. But shift work made training difficult and he gave up serious competitions for several years until he turned forty.

Then he staged an athletics comeback. He dusted down his spikes and began straddling the bar once more as a veteran - with highly successful results.

Since then Hickey has been competing regularly, often against men half his age - and size. He says his weight is ideal for testing the air beds which cushion the jumpers' falls!