

# THE LENS

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## ITN's action plan on course for success

by Mike Morris

Six weeks have now passed since I sat in a packed Studio One and revealed the full extent of the revolution which is hitting ITN. I believe success is now within our grasp. The huge turnout to the first staff meetings and the positive commitment of the unions to meet and talk about our plans constructively are clear evidence that people know that change is needed and expect us to make it happen.

A great deal has been achieved already. The unions have asked for a new partnership with management and we have responded by proposing a new high-level joint forum to meet regularly under joint union-management chairmanship to share information and work together to preserve jobs and secure the company's future. A high powered joint training committee has been agreed to work out in detail the retraining and reskilling programme which lies ahead.

It is now clear that the early retirement and voluntary severance schemes are going to be a success. The schemes are quite complex and subtle and it took quite a time before people realised quite how good they are. The number of enquiries has now passed the mark and already 90 have applied.

Another important development has been the revival of the Joint Shops Committee. I welcome this. The Action Plan sets difficult problems for all the unions in terms of demarcation and areas of negotiating rights. I have been truly heartened by the generosity of spirit shown by all the unions in putting the welfare of the staff as a whole before the special interest of their own members. Already we have held joint meetings over the pension and voluntary severance arrangements and the future of Traffic, and I expect many more to follow.

Turning now to the specific issues we have been discussing with the unions, I am limited in what I can say by the knowledge that not everything which has been agreed by the negotiating teams has been put to the members yet.

I don't think I would be breaching any confidences in saying that ACTT has accepted in principle all our proposals

with the exception of the total closure of Traffic although negotiators have indicated that they wish to talk in detail about the practicalities of all our plans. We are however close to an agreement on the immediate experimental operation of a new style cam-corder on the road with the kind of crewing arrangements proposed in the 'Into the Nineties'.

I believe we are close to complete agreement with the EETPU, including the historic merger of the lighting section with the outside crews.

We have also nearly reached total agreement with BETA which has scored two noticeable successes. Negotiators have saved the jobs of the Security Section by proposing changes in working practices which have led to the Company being able to make satisfactory savings and keep the security team on staff. In the clerical section they have won the right to the negotiation of a flexitime working pattern in exchange for agreeing to return to the working hours of the National Agreement.

What has been particularly exciting for me has been the enthusiasm with which the unions have picked up the idea of multi-skilling and run with it. We have been told that our multi-skilling plans do not go far enough and we are not talking about multi-skilling — much more like the 'rover' concept which we saw in the Boston TV station featured in the video.

I wouldn't want to say that there are not going to be problems and battles ahead before the present difficult time of uncertainty is ended. But I do now truly believe that the plan will be successfully implemented by agreement and without compulsory redundancy.

Perhaps the most difficult outstanding problem is the issue of the management. Lack of clear plans for the future shape of the management has created resentment among the staff and uncertainty among managers themselves. With the appointment of George Russell as our Chairman, it is becoming clearer to us what sort of company we are going to be and the question of the management structure has taken a giant step forward.

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# New chairman for ITN

Mr George Russell is to be the new Chairman of ITN. He will replace Mr Paul Fox, who recently joined the BBC as Managing Director of Television.

Mr Russell, who is 52, was a member of the Board of the Independent Broadcasting Authority from 1976 to 1986 and since 1987 he has been Deputy Chairman of the Channel Four Company. He has been Chief Executive of Marley plc since 1986.

Mr Russell's appointment breaks new ground for ITN. This is the first time ITN has had an independent Chairman from outside the ranks of ITV.

Mr David McCall, Chairman of the Independent Television Association, said: "We are very lucky to have George Russell as Chairman of ITN at this crucial stage in ITN's development. He has a thorough knowledge of the broadcasting industry."

David Nicholas, welcoming the appointment, said: "George Russell is a personal friend as well as a longtime friend of ITN's. He is one of the best managers of change in British industry. His wisdom and guidance will be key

elements in ITN's approach to the new competitive era ahead."

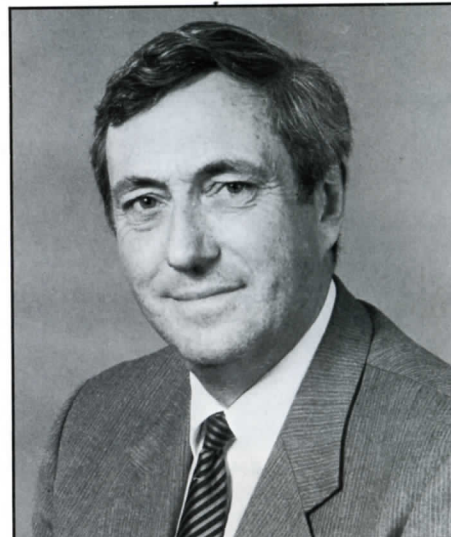
George Russell's background is in industry where he has an impressive record of reshaping companies and making them profitable.

Born and educated in North-East England, he has a BA Honours degree in Politics and Economics. His first job was with ICI in 1958. Eight years later he went to Canada to join Welland Chemical Company of Canada Ltd, where he became Vice-President and General Manager. In 1972 he returned to the UK with Alcan Aluminium and became Chief Executive and Managing Director in 1981.

He carried out the merger of Alcan Aluminium and British Aluminium to form the profitable British Alcan Aluminium.

He is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors and of the Institute of Industrial Managers and is Visiting Professor at the Department of Engineering at Newcastle University.

He was appointed a CBE in 1985 and became Honorary Doctor of Engineering



Russell: excellent manager.

in the same year. He has been a board member of the Northern Industrial Development Board, the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra, the Washington Development Corporation, the Civil Service Pay Research Unit and was a member of both the Megaw Inquiry into Civil Service pay and conditions and the Widdicombe Committee of Inquiry into the conduct of local government.

He was also a member of the CBI Council in 1984 and 1985.

He is married with three daughters.

The Lens hopes to carry a detailed interview with Mr Russell in a future edition.

## De'Ath award to student



Kevin Wright receives a cheque for R2,750 from Chairman of the School of Design of Natal Technikon, Derek Staniland. The cheque represents the annual award of the George De'Ath Bursary made to a deserving student at the college in Durban to enable the student to continue studies. The bursary is financed from the investment of a R25,000 donation from ITN. Wright is studying photography. He is in his second year.

## New recruits to ITN

ITN has welcomed several new members of staff during the last few weeks. These include: **Linda Renny**, a computer support person; **Rob White**, a Channel 4 News writer; **Jeffrey Goodwin**, a projects engineer; **James Baldwin**, a nighttime station engineer

and **Tim Cook** who joins as manager, communication engineering.

Those leaving the company include **Liam Hanley**, a writer; **Stan Rawlings**, a supervisory camera operator; **Ginny Borrow**, a keyboard operator; **Tom Watson** a storekeeper; **Elizabeth Moore**, a production assistant and **Sue Ayton**, C4 secretary, who is going to work for Selina Scott.

## Raycroft appointed to new training position

Mike Raycroft has been appointed training and development officer after two years working in production training.

Commenting on his move, Raycroft said: "I am very excited by this appointment. I am enthusiastic about being able to channel the wealth of talent within ITN into areas where the staff can develop their abilities."

Raycroft has been at ITN for 15 years in a variety of roles. He joined as a studio cameraman and eventually progressed to senior cameraman before switching to the role of floor manager finally becoming the supervisory floor manager before being seconded to production training in 1986.

Before joining ITN he worked for ILEA. He is interested in psychology and is halfway through a degree course in the subject, although he has currently suspended his studies. "It's a fascinating subject and I do hope to complete the degree in the future," he said.

# Gibraltar takes World News

On Monday 4 April, Gibraltar Television began taking ITN's *World News* as its main evening news. Before the launch, *World News* presenter John Suchet went to the Rock as guest of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation.

Yeah yeah, I've heard the one about "The newscaster and the Apes—Spot the Difference". And I'm delighted to report that on my recent visit to the Rock the natives betrayed no difficulty in distinguishing between the two.

At times, though, I knew how the apes felt. Being the Centre of Attraction is not easy. (Believe me, believe me.) David Roycroft and I got the red carpet treatment in Gibraltar in the week before we went on the air there.

A guide from the Gibraltar Tourist Bureau was assigned to us, and we were given a tour of the Rock—its caves, the centuries-old stalagmites, the tunnels and gun embouchures dug out by British soldiers during the Great Siege—the harbour where Nelson's body was brought after Trafalgar, soaked in brandy to stop it decomposing, and of course the latest tourist attraction: the petrol pump with the bullet hole in it from the IRA shooting earlier this year.

It's a curious sensation, being in Gibraltar. You're among fluent English-speaking, 100 per cent Brits, in streets lined with familiar English signs. But they'll switch into equally fluent Spanish in mid-sentence, and on a clear day you can see North Africa.

Everyone, it seems, knows ITN, and there was undisguised joy among Gibraltarians that they were about to get ITN nightly on their local television station, GBC. "ITN's *World News* for Gibraltar", said the front page headline of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*.

"It's the most important thing to happen to GBC since it was founded," said GBC's general manager, George Valarino. And he assured us that was no exaggeration.

Gibraltar is taking ITN's *World News* as its main nightly news programme. "It's good for us to know that each evening we'll have a professionally



John Suchet in the World News Studio.

produced, solid round-up of world news. At the very least it allows us to devote our resources to local news," said George Valarino.

It's pretty important for ITN's *World News* too. For this reason: Gibraltar is the first country in Europe to put the *World News* on its terrestrial channel. In other words, go to Gibraltar, switch on the box at 10 in the evening, and you get ITN's *World News*. You don't have to be connected to cable or have a satellite dish.

The population of Gibraltar—now the border with Spain is open—has swollen to around 30,000. Also, thousands of expatriate Britons on the Costa del Sol point their aerials to the left and pick up GBC, because the programmes are in English.

It's a sizeable audience, and makes Gibraltar country number 26 in Europe to receive us.

A week or so after we began transmission to Gibraltar, I spoke to the Head of News at GBC. He said he had received lots of reaction. I asked him to send me a selection of letters from viewers to let us read for ourselves what their reaction was. He laughed.

"Don't be silly, mi amigo," he said. "We don't write letters to each other down here. People stop me in the street to talk about your programme!"

## News in brief

### Liz returns to work

Former ITN secretary Liz Gunia has made a tremendous recovery after a serious car accident at the end of last year. Liz, who worked with Paul Mathews and Paul McKee, was paralysed during the accident but is now walking again and, although still undergoing extensive physiotherapy, is hoping to return to work at the end of the summer or early autumn. She now works at Central Television, in Nottingham. Liz would like to say thank you to ITN staff who clubbed together to buy her a present while she was still in hospital.

### Down memory lane

This week a local history group will start researching the history of Wells Street, its buildings and businesses and its study begins at ITN. The group, The St. Marylebone Society local history section, aims to find out as much information as possible about the area. Once they have collated the facts a comparison will be made with other, older records of what has happened in the street. Members of the group will be visiting ITN this week.

# NEWS AT NONE

The titles roll, the news is introduced, and the camera focuses on the presenter. "Good evening. And the news tonight is that we have no news except a lot of boring old crap about foreign countries that no-one in their right mind is interested in so we're going to show a cartoon of Tom and Jerry instead because that will go down a lot better."

Don't worry - it's just a suggestion from an irate viewer who thinks that it just isn't right that we are subjected to international news. It's the job of the press office to make sure that such complaints are answered fairly with the viewer getting a better perspective of the aims of ITN's programmes.

The press office gets hundreds of letters each month. Most are intelligent, thoughtful, constructive and complimentary - especially of the presenters - dozens of fan pics are sent out every week. But others do seem to confirm that only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.

But of course when I say Englishmen - I do mean women too and the Irish . . . and the Scots . . . and the Welsh . . . Scores of clans people write in regularly having detected an "anti-them" bias . . . Sometimes they are a little off the mark. For example the irate viewers who wrote in, steam rising from their pens as embittered indignation raced their writing implements across the Basildon Bond in a flurry of self-righteousness. One wrote, smelling salts still close at hand: "I have just heard an ITN reporter tell us the hijackers (Kuwaiti) have 'Welshed' on their promise to release their prisoners. How can you allow such a term to be used. It is an insult to the Welsh nation. The term refers - as you well know - to rascals and bookies (found in many nations). The BBC always says reneged these days."

Well bully (if that doesn't offend anyone) to the BBC and who's going to stand up for the bookies? And as the press office dutifully pointed out the word "welch" has 19th century origins and broadly means to decamp without payment and does not reflect on the inhabitants of Wales in any way.

Thank goodness. We can all rest easy in our beds tonight. But can we?

It seems this depends on two factors. Firstly: what's on *News at Ten* - any gory pictures, eh? And secondly whether or not you can move at the speed of light. Let me explain. Mrs X had made her cup of cocoa for the evening, put the cat out

and left her order for the milkman and was quietly nestling down to watch *News at Ten* one night when the presenter warned that some of the following scenes may prove upsetting.

Mrs X contends she hardly had time to put her cup of steaming chocolate to rest on her wickerwork placemat before the grisly footage had filled her screen . . . Her cry: "Can't you give us some more notice?" And just to prove you can't please everyone all the time, I offer by way of example, a couple from North Yorkshire. Having been advised that the following scenes could prove distressing, they sat back, apparently with much rubbing of the hands and wicked glints of the eyes, braced for "horrendous scenes like the Israeli soldiers beating up their prisoners" but alas "we were quite surprised to be shown [shots of the mustard gas attack] a few ugly blisters but no more." We'll try and arrange a seal culling for you.

You will be relieved to know that not all viewers are so bloodthirsty. There was a little old lady who phoned to ask just what happened to that nice Cecil Parkinson who used to read the news at lunchtime and another who begs: "Can't the weatherman have a seat?" Possibly but only if it has an ejector seat for when he gets it wrong. Seriously perhaps someone should get to the bottom of this problem.

And while we're on anatomy. It seems viewers can get distracted from the point of the programmes and even who makes them. For example, the woman who wrote in - her attention diverted to such an extent she couldn't even remember the programme - desperate to discover just who is the footballer whose legs appear in the backdrop when you announce the football results.

And on the subject of sports results, the cry comes from the valleys again. Why is it that the rugby results always come second to the football ones? Perhaps it's because the presenters can't pronounce Welsh names. This is another post bag favourite. Welsh, they rightly contend, is a beautiful language - and greater efforts ought to be made to pronounce words properly. One viewer (who believes all our presenters have "Asian" lilt) even offered to come and coach our journalists in elocution.

Perhaps if our reporters enunciated better we could have spared one family, straight from an Alan Bennett sketch,

palpitations and most unnatural hot flushes and sweaty palms. It happened quite innocently one 5.45 during an account of a violent assault. So winded was "father" that he couldn't wait to write. With trembling hand and laundered white handkerchief mopping his brow, he dialled the ITN number. "I just want you to know that I think it is disgraceful that you can use a word like that on the early evening news." There could be only one reply from the press office: "What word is that?"

"I couldn't bring myself to repeat it! My wife's so shocked she's had to go and lie down." A faint cry could be heard off stage, confirming mother's horizontal pose on the eiderdown, fanning herself with a copy of the *TV Times*.

The press officer persisted: "I'm afraid I can't really help you unless you tell me what the word is."

Not even an anagram of the offending word could be forced from his lips, for five minutes the press officer in question tried to guess the word without saying any word which may cause a fatal heart attack in the caller. Eventually (using an American technique of forcing victims to relive their attack) the man was coaxed to repeat the sentence leading up to the "word".

"Well it started with the attack . . . you said the attacker was armed with a telescopic . . . you know . . . that word . . . a man's thingy." The press officer dutifully played back the offending tape. "Oh I see I think your wife misheard it. He said telescopic cosh."

"I see thank you very much."

The telephone callers even outnumber the letter writers and the press office is used to settle bets, solve puzzles, give addresses and information. People often ring and write about programmes unrelated to ITN, want to chat or discuss a personal problem and the press officers have to take it all in their stride. Even the persistent caller who phoned up several times, each time trying to disguise his voice, to tell them that Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards is the greatest leader this country's had since Winston Churchill.

So bearing all this in mind, reporters please remember, happy as the press office is to publicise your stories, when you say "rocks" when a viewer thinks you ought to say "stones", it's the press office that has to deal with the ensuing pen and ink.

SUSAN D'ARCY

# Into the Nineties

Within the next two years ITN will move to its new headquarters in Gray's Inn Road to what will be the most modern television news centre in the world. But before that ITN is planning a massive investment in technology and a streamlining of operations. The developments are still being discussed but here we offer answers to some of the main questions.

**Q: WHY HAS ITN DECIDED THAT IT IS TIME FOR CHANGE?**

A: There are five main reasons why change is inevitable. Firstly ITN is likely to change into more than just a division of ITV and so customers—always the lifeblood of the organisation—will become even more important. Secondly, shareholders are also looking for change as well as this the government has made its views about television well-known. This leads on to the fourth reason—deregulation. This will recreate more competition. Finally these competitors will be using the latest technology and to keep a leading position in news gathering ITN will have to use this advanced equipment too.

**Q: ITN PLANS TO DISPLACE 142 JOBS. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PEOPLE IN THESE JOBS?**

A: The company hopes that it will be able to absorb many of these people through existing vacancies, retraining and new opportunities such as news programmes like Channel 4's breakfast television. As well as those taking early retirement.

**Q: WHAT IS THE DEAL FOR EARLY RETIREMENT?**

A: For those between 60 and 64, ITN is offering the same terms as if employees were leaving at 65. In addition, retirees will receive £171 until they reach 65. For employees between 55 and 59, if they elect to take their normal retirement at 60, the deal offers an immediate pension with added years equivalent to the period between their retirement and their 60th birthday. As well as this there is a lump sum payment starting at two years' salary for 55-year-olds sliding to six months' for 59-year-olds.

**Q: HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE MADE ENQUIRIES ABOUT EARLY RETIREMENT AND VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE?**



A: So far about 90 people.

**Q: WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE?**

A: Staff aged between 50 and 54 will receive a lump sum equivalent to six weeks' basic pay for each year of continuous service subject to a minimum of eight weeks' salary.

**Q: WHAT IS THE FUTURE COMPANY ATTITUDE TO THE UNIONS GOING TO BE?**

A: None of our proposals contravene the national agreements that we have with the unions. But we have local agreements which we would like to change and we hope that we can do this by consent.

**Q: WHY ARE THE VAST MAJORITY OF CUTS BEING MADE IN THE ACTT AREAS WHILE THE NUJ LOSES ONLY NINE JOBS?**

A: This is because the changes are technology-related and therefore affect the ACTT more. However the journalists do not feel they are being given an easy ride.

**Q: THERE SEEMS TO BE A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE NUMBERS OF JOBS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD WILL BE LOST AND THE ACTUAL JOB LOSSES THAT HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. WHY IS THIS?**

A: The apparent discrepancy is caused because the loss of management jobs has not been included in the general paper. The number of managers at ITN will reduce in line with the staff losses, that is by 12%.

**Q: ARE YOU SURE THAT THESE PROPOSALS WILL NOT AFFECT THE QUALITY OF PROGRAMMES?**

A: We are confident that the proposals will not damage the quality of the

programmes. We are committed to a high-quality service.

**Q: WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PROPOSED SAVINGS?**

A: They will at least partly be used to improve coverage further.

**Q: HOW CAN WE TALK ABOUT THINGS LIKE A 24-HOUR RADIO STATION OR WINNING THE CONTRACT FOR THE INTO THE NIGHT SERVICE, WHEN WE WILL BE LOSING THE SKILLED STAFF THAT COULD RUN THESE SERVICES?**

A: To cut costs we must lose some of our staff. Of course we do hope to win new contracts but these contracts will only be operated on efficient crewing.

**Q: ARE THE EARLY RETIREMENT AND SEVERANCE TERMS NEGOTIABLE?**

A: No. We think they are very generous. LWT is offering a better deal but that offer is beyond the means of most companies. Our terms are appropriate and sufficient to attract people.

**Q: WHAT EXACTLY DOES RE-TRAINING INVOLVE?**

A: For staff with front-line technical experience there would be a general technical training of three to four weeks followed by a more job-specific training of another three to four weeks. For staff without front-line technical experience an additional basic training of three to four weeks will also be needed. All job vacancies where the necessary skills may be acquired through retraining will be advertised internally. A joint management/union training committee has been set up to develop these ideas.

**Q: WHAT IF I APPLY FOR RE-TRAINING AND MY NEW JOB DOES NOT PAY AS WELL?**

A: Your salary will be frozen at your old wage until, with increments and pay rises, your new salary catches up with it. Then you will receive rises as normal.

**Q: IF I APPLY AND AM ACCEPTED AND RETRAINED WILL I HAVE TO SIT AN EXAM?**

A: No. There will be assessment by the course tutor and trainers but there will be no final exam.

# The "insider" story



**DAVID AKERMAN** looks in on *Wall Street*. The Oscar-winning film inspired by the dealings of Ivan Boesky who was sentenced to three years in prison for insider trading

**W**all Street is a story of sin and redemption in New York City. It's also about insider trading, which is what naughty stockbrokers, like Ivan Boesky, get up to when they think no-one is looking.

Young Bud Fox is just another struggling broker until he meets the dealer of his dreams, Gordon Gekko. Mr Gekko is fast and mean, all Brylcreem and braces, he makes a fortune playing the market on his own, strictly illegal, terms. Bud wants in, but Gekko has a price: he needs information. After a twinge of conscience Bud bites the fruit of the forbidden Big Apple and pretty soon he's insider dealing with the best of them, procuring the precious but unlawful "info" which enables Gekko to make a killing. The profits flow. Bud moves into a swanky apartment on the Upper East Side, having acquired along the way a blond Amazon of a lover. It all seems too good to be true; and so it is.

Things turn nasty when Bud persuades Gekko to rescue the ailing Blue Star airline where Mr Fox senior is a long-serving union official with a serious

contempt for money men. Gekko, needless to say, does the dirty and the tension turns on whether Bud will successfully defeat the Prince of pecuniary darkness and redeem his mortal soul in the process.

Plot aside for a moment, the best thing about *Wall Street* is the photography which works wonders with the admittedly wonderful Manhattan skyline. The film's other striking quality is the use of the camera as hunter: it stalks through the dealing room turning warily this way and that, mimicking the motions of its subject, then backing off quickly, fearful of being seen. It's as if we're in the jungle, and of course we are.

Meanwhile the story is dominated by Michael Douglas' Oscar-winning portrayal of king of the jungle, Gordon Gekko. Like most fictional devils Gekko has all the best tunes and though, to be fair, there's nothing wrong with Charlie Sheen's performance as Bud Fox, or for that matter with his (real) father, Martin Sheen's performance as his fictional father, they're really paper-thin creations up against the vitality and wit of

the monstrous Gekko.

The trouble is the film's strength (Gekko) is also partly its weakness. Gekko makes insider trading seem not just good fun but good sense. "Wake up will you pal," he tells Bud, "if you're not inside you're outside." It's a facile remark but it's never challenged: nobody makes a case for outsider trading. Bud turns against Gekko because his acquisition of Blue Star airline will mean hardship for his family, not because he rejects his way of doing business. It's a pragmatic decision, not a moral one. The moral muddle deepens, however, as the real sinners emerge not as those who gain unlawful information, like Gekko, but those who have access to it and allow themselves to be bribed. It all suggests that the rules of stockbroking are ludicrously arbitrary.

So *Wall Street* is a shoddy morality play, which owes something to Faust (though any comparison would be absurd) and something to Mr Boesky. In the end, though, it owes most to the traditions of melodrama . . . which is a shame.

**David Akerman**

## OBITUARIES



### Kate Grobler

The ITN newsroom lost one of the most popular members of its team recently with the death of Kate Grobler.

Kate had been with the company since 1973 as a copy typist and her always happy voice was known to ITN stringers throughout the country telephoning in stories.

She always had a smile on her

face and a cheerful word for everyone. Her presence at ITN enriched the lives of many of her friends—always joking about her attempts to keep fit . . . her latest holiday plans . . . and her Brighton home. She was a lady full of happiness which radiated to all who knew her.

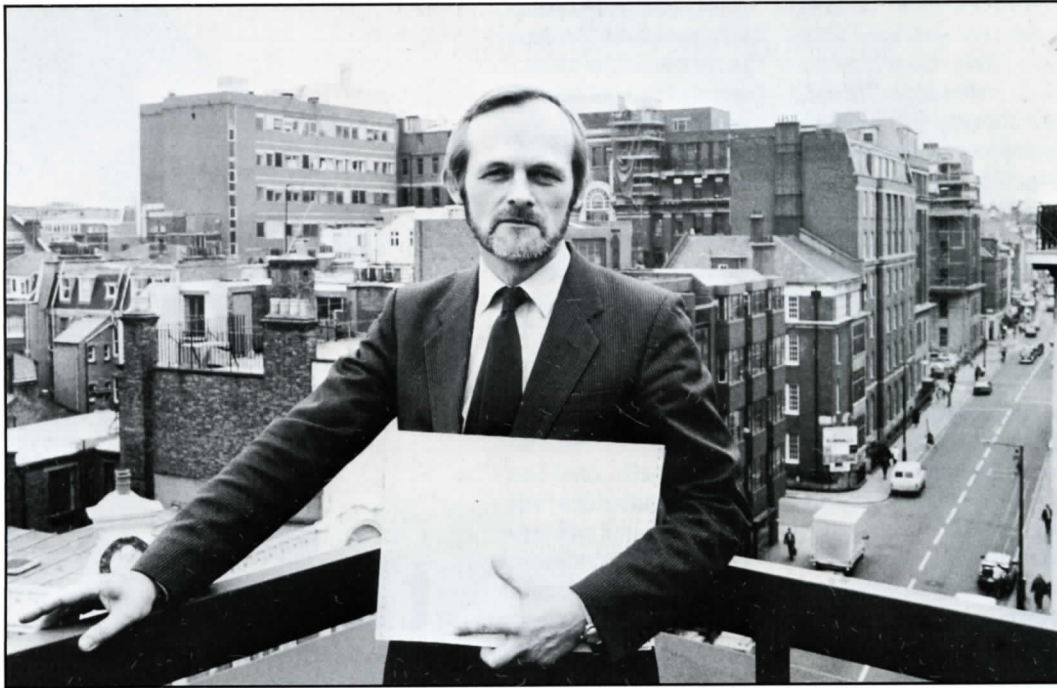
The amount of money collected by her friends in ITN was more than enough for

flowers so the remainder was sent to the Hackney Hospice where Kate's father was nursed. Her closest friends believe this would have been Kate's wish.

Many colleagues and friends attended the funeral at St James' Church, Clapton and afterwards at the City of London Cemetery. She will be sadly missed.

**Ken Turnock**

# Getting his just desserts



**It's not only because of his astute political analysis that colleagues hold David Cowling in awe. JUDY LUSTIGMAN found out it was also to do with vast quantities of bread-and-butter pudding**

I thought psephology was a skin disease until I discovered Cowling. And even though he's been with the company since September 1986, not everyone at ITN has discovered our resident psephologist David Cowling. I got to know him last year on the General Election Unit, often calling on his vast store of facts and figures and funny stories. But what exactly is his job?

"As a political analyst I try to provide a service within ITN for journalists and others who may need advice or help on opinion polls, election analysis and statistics.

"Sometimes when journalists are racing around in a great rush they haven't the time to do that, so part of my role is to try to ensure that people have as much information as possible in order to make the best assessment of what's actually happened, as opposed to what appears to have happened.

"You also need a feel for the politics of the area, the politics of your own country, as well as trying to stand back from the different interpretations which the parties are putting upon results, and giving your own best objective judgement about what you think is the true picture."

This can be difficult as Britain, alone among all major western democracies, doesn't have an automatic system of collecting election figures. There is no central source of results for the May 5 elections so David has had to write to beg copies of the results from 122 councils around the country.

For those of you who haven't yet visited David, you will find him over in South Island (45 Mortimer Street) on the impregnable first floor. David works in a corridor. He has grown accustomed to sitting in this busy thoroughfare where anyone coming from an office to his left and wishing to communicate with anyone to his right must first brush past his chair.

Despite the threatening palls of acrid black smoke emanating from his work area (I swear he keeps his pipe and Havanas alight at the same time) he maintains that he welcomes these incursions. He wasn't completely straight-faced when he told me: "I find that it's a

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***"Legend has it that he was seen in the 'Policemen's Canteen' scoffing three helpings of bread-and-butter pudding in one sitting."***

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fascinating way of meeting colleagues, and has introduced me to more people at ITN than probably any concentrated programme of interviews and fact-finding missions would have done."

He insists that it compares well with the cramped conditions he had to share for seven years at the House of Commons when he was Personal Assistant to Peter Shore, then shadow minister. Previously he was his special adviser when Shore was Secretary of State for the Environment. David tells the story of how he was selected for the position.

"It was a fascinating job interview for

the DoE. It was the time when Labour was in the minority government. I went up to the 16th floor of Marsham Street and was ushered in to see Peter Shore. I sat down, we started talking and suddenly one of the principal officers rushed in saying 'terribly sorry, Secretary of State, but there's a Division'. So the rest of my interview was conducted in the lift, and then in the back of a government car which mounted the pavement in order to get him there for the Division."

He thoroughly enjoyed his years working with Shore and had once thought seriously about becoming a politician himself, but one thing decided him against it.

"I saw what it did to people, and the commitment MPs have to have in terms of time and the cost to their families. I thought: 'Do I want to be in a position where I don't see my family. You have children, they grow up, marry and you review your life and your involvement with them and you suddenly think 'what did I miss', and you miss a tremendous amount."

He admits to a touch of nostalgia for the atmosphere of the House of Commons, but says he's happier at ITN. "Very few people have the privilege of having their hobby turned into their full-time profession - observing elections, electoral trends, opinion polls, what they mean and how to interpret them."

This interest in election trends started during his time in local government when

*continued on page 15*

"Pipe-smoking should be made illegal!" fumed Sue Carpenter as she slammed the door on an offending smoke source.

Ms C. was being forced to be passive at the time - a passive smoker, that is - and she didn't like it. "Passive smoking" is about to supersede "profit-centre" as the buzz-phrase of the month at ITN - and it looks set to light up as many interesting debates as its predecessor. For anyone who hasn't updated their filofax glossary lately, it's the official term for inhalation of other people's tobacco smoke and the subject of some controversy between pro- and anti-smoking lobbies.

At the heart of the problem is fresh air, or, rather, the lack of it. Every time smokers unwrap a new packet they exercise their democratic right to ignore the Government Health Warning on the side (or perhaps to note its absence if it happens to be duty free booty from a recent foreign trip!). Non-smokers choose to keep their lungs clear; they may be deliberately health conscious or simply repulsed by the habit. Unfortunately, in confined airspaces, there's conflict of interest as we all compete for the same oxygen. Our workplace, just like public transport, shops, bars and other public places, is a site for this battle. But unlike the other locations, for most of us, it's not a place which can be avoided.

Recently there's been growing pressure on employers to examine staff opinions about the issue of smoking at work and in response to this, ITN's health and safety committee sent out a questionnaire in April, results of which are shown on page 11 of this *Lens*. It makes interesting reading, showing that an overwhelming 85% of staff would like some formal restriction on smoking (a percentage which presumably includes some smokers, since they constituted 22% of respondents). This figure corresponds to a National Opinion Poll for *The Standard* in July last year which found that 86% of non-smokers and 81% of smokers felt that "people who don't smoke should have the right to work in air free from tobacco smoke".

So Sue Carpenter certainly isn't alone in her objections. John Suchet puts it this way: "If you vomit over me, I won't like it. But I can have a good shower, send my clothes to the dry cleaner, and I'll be none the worse for it.

"If you smoke over me, though, that's a whole different thing. I can have a good shower, send my clothes to the cleaner, but what can I do about my lungs? Or my throat? Or my eyes? Or my nose?"

"More to the point, why should I have to do anything at all? Not to smoke is normal. Smoking is not normal. Just as

not to vomit is normal. Vomiting is not normal."

Not everyone feels quite so inflamed about the whole affair. Mary Green in accounts simply objects to the smell of smoke and the way it clings to her hair and clothes. She and Sue Johnston retaliated against the smokers in their office by setting up a couple of fans to clear the air on their side of the room.

Meanwhile, Tim Ewart reports that the Washington bureau has already adopted a no-smoking policy. "Smoking is banned in the office - a rule supported by everyone, even when the pressure is most intense and nicotine longings the most acute. I've never heard a grumble about the ban from any ITN visitors either, including the heaviest of smokers. As anyone who's been here will tell you, we enjoy an infinitely more pleasant working atmosphere than ITN House because of this ban... Smokers do need places to go, though. Edward Stourton uses the lavatory, and he just loves it in there!"

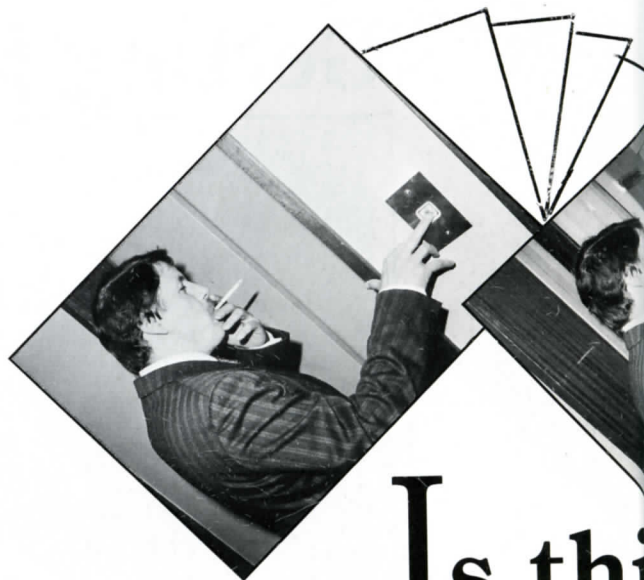
Jack Bryan in Profiles wouldn't approve. He thinks "smoking in the loo" should be a hanging offence on the basis that it's one place everyone has to visit at some time or another!

But what do the smokers think about this cloud of vitriol puffed back at them?

"I find that I just can't get excited about it at all; one way or the other," claimed Super Channel's Artemis Pittas, who has never been known to vomit over John Suchet, however much he might prefer it to her normal habit. Most of Artemis's fellow-addicts seem to take a very relaxed attitude towards the prospect of a smoking policy at work (actually, I'm reliably informed that "habituation" is a better term than "addiction" since physical addiction to nicotine is less common than the psychological dependency most smokers develop).

In fact the search for a totally unrepentant smoker proved to be difficult. David Cowling, a committed

pipe and cigar man, was mildly unabashed: "when the people who hypocritically decry smoking, stop polluting my lungs with dangerous emissions from their cars, I'll have to reconsider my position." He added that he smokes "because I enjoy it", but that he recognises that his preferences are rather pungent and would happily take regular trips to Brunchies if a smoking ban were introduced. Most people said that they would uphold the introduction of non-smoking areas, at the very least. Some were concerned about what alternatives the company would offer existing smokers and whether there would be any assistance offered for those who would like to give up. One ITN smoker of many years' standing said



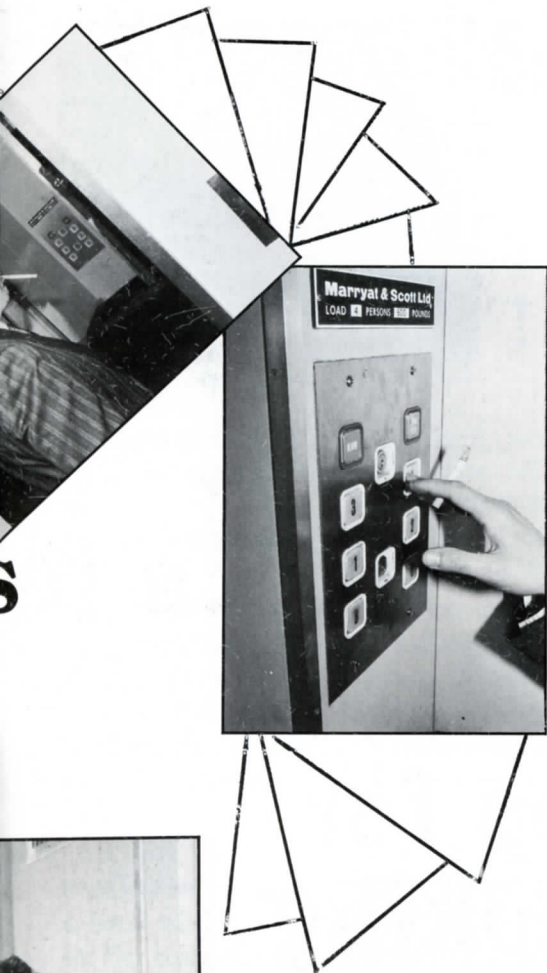
Is thi

## the last stop for smoking at ITN?

asks DEBBIE SCHOOLEY







that he felt that a complete ban in large areas like the newsroom would be "a bit much". He felt the onus lay with the company to ensure that such areas were more satisfactorily air-conditioned. In spite of his heavy consumption of the evil weed he believed courtesy prevailed and would never subject others to his smoke if politely requested not to.

With such a rational and considerate crowd of smokers it seems a little difficult to work out where the fog comes from in the newsroom or why any of them started smoking in the first place! Paul Mathews feels guilty about exercising his vice in public but he still can't quite resist the temptation to reach for the magic packet when the pressure's on. He puts it all down to changing social awareness. "At the time I started smoking, it was

socially accepted - in fact, it was **the** thing to do. A lot of smokers of my generation didn't start off knowing the health risks or with it having the stigma it has now." Like many others, Paul would love to give up.

Alastair Stewart declared to the nation on Budget Day that he'd have liked the Chancellor to give him a financial incentive to kick the habit. Judging by the small cloud that can still be spotted over the 5.45 Desk each afternoon, Mr Lawson failed in that particular duty. Perhaps Alastair is another candidate for any assistance the company might offer those wishing to quit the little cancer sticks.

The health and safety committee is keen to stress that no decisions have been reached as yet on any kind of policy. They're all busily considering the "valuable data" from

their survey.

It's a tricky issue for the employer. Most companies tend to favour a smoking ban because it can be highly cost-effective. Money is saved on cleaning and decorating costs; ventilation systems run more efficiently; sensitive technical and computer equipment is less liable to damage; risk of fire is reduced and both building and life insurance premiums may be cut.

In addition, less smoking leads to a healthier workforce - and not just amongst the smokers. This year a government report from the Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health confirmed that passive smoking increases the risk of lung cancer in non-smokers by between 10% and 30%. This means that several hundred of the 40,000 deaths from lung cancer each year might be caused by passive smoking. Statistics cynics may well balk at the probability factor but a growing number of people judge that it's too high a risk to ignore.

In fact some claim that it is already an employer's responsibility to protect non-smokers from the danger. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Public Health Act 1936 state that employers have a duty to keep the atmosphere free

from "noxious effluvia". The section is, however, somewhat vague and almost certainly contravened by an Efes take-away! A recent Private Member's Bill amending the Act to specify passive smoking failed at its second reading on April 29.

The whole situation is something of a legal minefield. Smokers may be a minority of the workforce, but they have their rights too. Any change of contract can require a maximum of 12 weeks' notice (for employees of 12 years' service or longer) under the Employment Protection Act of 1978. Whether this applies to a smoking ban is open to debate.

In practice, smokers are not likely to find themselves subjected to draconian measures and the threat of dismissal if they don't mend their ways! Companies who have already introduced smoking policies include BP, Volvo, IBM, British Telecom and Boots. They have all found means of gradual introduction to their final policies and none has gone back on the schemes once started. If reports claiming that two-thirds of smokers would really like to give up can be believed, the whole idea of smoking policy might well prove extremely popular.

Different companies approach the problem in a variety of ways. The most extreme measure is a total ban on smoking anywhere on the premises. Pollsters MORI discovered at one stage that all its employees were non-smokers and took the opportunity to declare their offices nicotine-free. Now they advertise for non-smokers only in all their recruitment. "Ethicon", a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson based in Edinburgh, allow no smoking in meetings, which they define as two or more staff gathered together, i.e. they only permit smoking in offices with a sole occupant. The idea of "core time" - smoking only between certain hours - has been tried by some companies but it's doubtful that this either significantly reduces the health risk or improves the working environment for non-smokers.

Apparently the most popular and successful idea, according to Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), is to have non-smoking as the norm with allocated smoking areas or rooms - employees have been known to term them "sin bins". Those who suffer pangs and withdrawal symptoms can satisfy their cravings and everyone else gets a cleaner environment.

Who knows, if ITN adopted this system perhaps Ed Stourton could come out of the lavatory. Sue Carpenter might even return to her normal, less flammatory self!



# Off to sunny Spain!



The birthday boy: Mickey Doyle.

Some people will go anywhere and do anything for a party as ITN sound recordist Mickey Doyle found out. Back at the beginning of the year he mentioned that he would like to do something special for his sixtieth birthday. And just a few weeks ago he did just that heading off to Spain's Costa del Sol with 40 or so ITN colleagues and friends for a birthday bash.

The fun started on the plane when impersonating ITN staff reached new heights – literally – when, at 35,000 feet up, one of the Caledonian air stewardesses dressed up as John Sharman to pour the celebration champagne.

Three hours later we reached our base for the weekend in sunny Torremolinos and prepared for the party to really start.

No-one quite remembers if the following 72 hours were truly memorable, though it was definitely a fun-filled celebration. ITN staff took over the Rover's Return, a bar in the vicinity which was a positive health risk, as well as Carlo's bar, Champagne Charlie's and Pinocchio's where we hoped we might catch sight of Frank Sinatra who is reputed to haunt the drinking spot.

It was especially nice for present ITN staff to catch up with some former workers. In particular Ken Taylor (ex-cameraman), John Soldini (ex-sound recordist) and Patsy Wright (ex-personnel officer) who all looked in fine form. It was truly a time for friendship and fun as we helped Mickey enter a new decade.

**CHRISTINE HOGG** was among a party of ITN revellers who made sure that sound recordist Mickey Doyle had a 60th birthday to remember. Forty friends headed off to celebrate in style

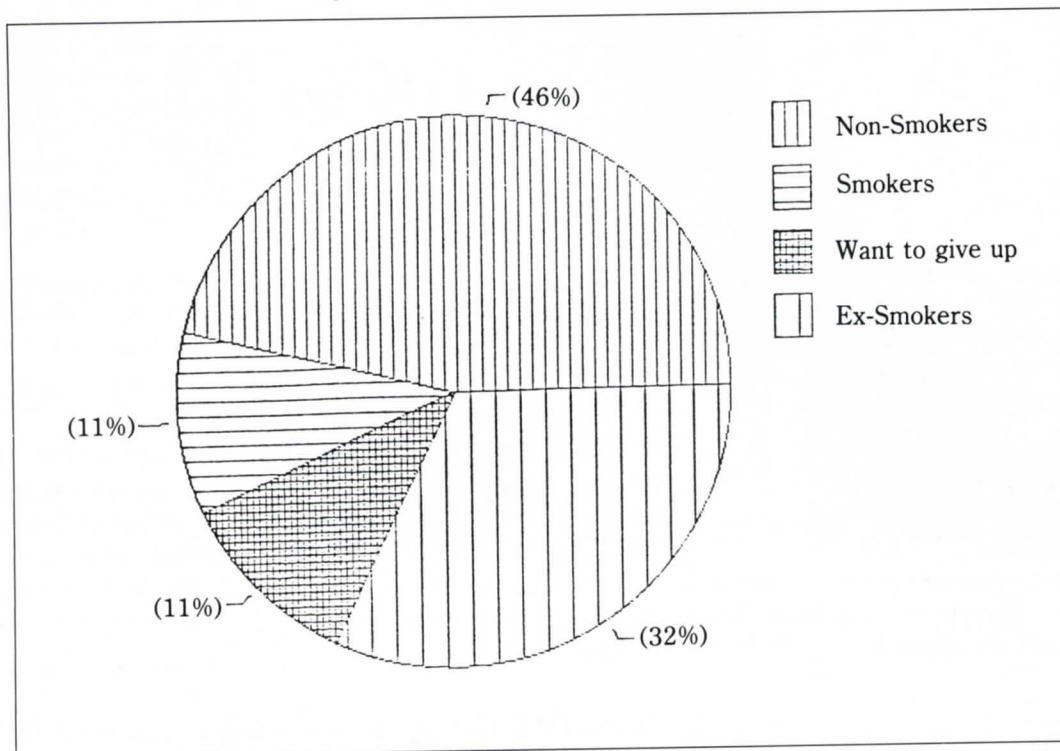


Seventy-two hours of fun, friendship and celebrations on Spain's Costa del Sol earlier this year.



# Smoking at ITN – the facts

## Analysis of staff smoking habits



72% of staff said that they did mind working where people were smoking and 85% wanted more restriction on smoking at work



Another exception to the total ban ruling was in the restaurant. Here 40% of those responding to the questionnaire wanted separate areas



42% wanted smoking banned in all areas, only 9% would like no restrictions. (17% wanted smoking allowed at break times only)



22% of the staff who returned the questionnaire are smokers and of these 81% admitted that at the moment they do smoke when they are at work



For the eight specific areas in the questionnaire the response was, in general, overwhelmingly in favour of a total ban



32% of the smokers claimed that they would be likely to give up smoking entirely if they could no longer smoke when they were at work



One exception to this was the bar where 48% of staff wanted no restrictions and only 25% wanted to see a total banning of smoking



Half of the smokers who answered the questionnaire said they would use help at work to give up smoking if they were offered it



**DEREK WALKER**, chairman of the health and safety committee writes: In April this year a questionnaire on smoking at work was sent out by the personnel office to all permanent staff. A return of 65% was achieved. We were very pleased with this response and we would like to thank those who took part for their co-operation. The survey has provided the committee with valuable data which it is now examining.

## ITN says farewell



Peter Banyard enjoys the celebrations for his retirement. Feature on next page.

## Bob Hollocks retires

by Mike Neusten

The retirement party illustrated below was to say farewell to Bob Hollocks after 27 years at ITN during which time he filled a wide variety of roles.

Bob joined ITN from the Philips Company in 1961 and for many years presided over his lighting and camera control shift in news studios from Television House in Kingsway to our present Studio One. Older colleagues will remember his philosophical approach and his cheerful comments whenever a correspondent or newscaster turned up with herringbone pattern jacket or blue cromakey shirt. Older colleagues will also remember chess games with Bob at weekends in MCR and on his retirement a goodly selection of his retired mates came to wish him well.

Bob spent many years as studio supervisor, and as station engineer saw service in many parts of the world including Africa, the Caribbean and USSR where he was the ITN station engineer during the Moscow Olympic games in 1980.

Bob rejoined Engineering in 1981 and for the last few years worked as manager, communications being responsible for the installation of our Westminster, Scotland Yard, Buckingham Palace and Whitehall Open Ender video network.

We wish him well and hope he will come by from time to time. Bob will be missed by his Friday lunchtime colleagues who will no doubt frequently toast their absent friend on the 7th floor.



## MEDIA QUOTES

- In the face of public apathy, Jill Morrell continues her fight to keep John McCarthy's name topical. "If people are allowed to forget him, there is no incentive for anybody to ever get him back."—**Jill Morrell.**

- "TV-am has taken off the American comedy, Happy Days."—*Campaign.*

- "Darling, you've got the perfect TV face. What eyes and what bone structure." This translates as: "Given decent lighting and plenty of make-up this bimbo could look OK."—**Selina Scott.**

- "Most successful TV executives are workaholics but David Nicholas goes one step further. He is a radio and television fanatic."—*Broadcast.*

- "When the Government has had time to reflect, it will realise that it has over-reacted."—**Lord Thomson** on the Death on the Rock programme.

- "The standards of the media have declined to the point of institutionalised hysteria."—**Bernard Ingham.**

- "Television is simply not that important."—**Ludovic Kennedy.**

- "The working media claims as a matter of right an exaltation of status that has never been legally conferred and that no-one else is entitled to."—**Conrad Black**, owner of *The Daily Telegraph.*

- "About sixty per cent of the population want the House of Commons to be televised, but the coverage is not meant to rival Eastenders."—**Glyn Mathias.**

- "TV boss Sue Tinson is to domestic bliss and maternal spirit what Ian Botham is to adult behaviour."—*Today newspaper.*

# ITN's gentle giant

**GEORGE FFITCH**  
shares with us his  
memories of  
working with  
**Peter Banyard**  
who retired  
earlier this year



*A surprise gathering of work mates to honour a popular colleague.*

I was going to say that I shall never forget the day I first met Peter Banyard, but unfortunately I find that I have forgotten the exact date.

However, that doesn't matter – the occasion does. It was the day in July 1955 when a group of us hacks assembled in the bare rooms of Ingersoll House, Kingsway, to learn the black arts of being a sub editor on the incipient commercial television news service. We approached the task with great uncertainty but desperately grateful for the money.

Our first exercise was to learn how to become script writers but, alas, the only "facility" available was a silent projector and a supply of old newsreels.

Anyway, there was this giant who introduced himself as Peter Banyard. (I've often wondered how absolutely huge Peter must seem to that other wonderful original, Leo Rosenberg.) So they showed the silent newsreels, we made up the commentary and declaimed it in the best imitations of *Movietone News* you've ever heard.

Provided you didn't have a wife, family or mortgage – and could take a joke – it was all great fun. It got serious when we moved over to Television House, went on air (so we were told – we couldn't get a picture in the newsroom) and "sub editors" like Reggie Bosanquet and myself found ourselves on the road as reporters.

If you wanted to learn the new trade of an ITN reporter there were no more friendly and generous teachers than the film editors. They welcomed you coming up to the preview theatre to watch your rushes, to stand behind them as they edited your precious stuff on the Steenbecks and explained the mysteries of how far away from the picture frame sound on film was.

No one was more generous in his support for the reporters than Peter Banyard, and Reggie Bosanquet would have been the first

to support me in that. Indeed, we all three became close personal friends. We had a floating poker school in each other's houses or flats for years until it melted away with moves and growing families. We were the last of the big gamblers: on a really bad night you might lose as much as £5!

But back to Peter. He had joined ITN from *Paramount News* where he had been a "cutter", as they called film editors there. He edited some of the first *Roving Reports*, became the second shift leader with the admirable Len Green and pioneered the experiment of sending a film editor away on location at events like the party conferences.

He might not want to remember all of that, for he took part – an unwitting part – in one of the great cock-ups in ITN's history. If you've never heard of it that's because it's just another proof of Ffitch's Fourth Law of the Media: "Do not assume that a total disaster has been seen by everybody in the world or that it will be remembered the next day by anyone that has."

It was the Liberal Party assembly in Edinburgh. Peter was in the STV studios in Glasgow editing the film we had been sending across. With the late-night wrap-up of the conference he would cue in the film inserts from STV.

Unfortunately, there was a slight snag. STV forgot to book, or the GPO pulled the plug on the lines from the Edinburgh studio to Glasgow. Except, of course, for a phone control line.

Thankfully, it was before the days of video tape. But you can imagine what happened. Ian Trethowan began his introduction: Rediffusion in London found themselves without picture or sound so put up the breakdown caption and played music. Peter was then cued in from Edinburgh (where we knew nothing of what was happening) and ran the appropriate film clip. Rediffusion seeing picture and sound went back to the film. Film

runs out and back to Trethowan or Ffitch in Edinburgh. Rediffusion goes to caption and music again. Film comes up and they go back to film. And so it went on and on and on.

I wish I had seen it.

You really all know Peter's career after that – it went from strength to strength to secretary of the ITN Club! Head of Film in 1973, where he had the task of organising transition from film to electronic cameras – and how well he handled that. Then on to Manager Film and ENG, coping with the great expansion that followed the introduction of Channel 4.

But none of that ranks with the fact that he conned the lovely PA Barbara Barnes into marrying him in 1961 and is the father of two marvellous kids (one can still call them kids?). A diffident modest man he was knocked out on the first Sunday of October last year when, thinking he was being taken to a quiet lunch, he was driven to the Horse Guards Parade where all the camera and outside crews paraded before him in tribute.

Now, he says, he is really going to take up collecting antique pewter and is already leaning on his friends to accompany him around the country to auctions. He is also going back to painting in oils.

"I'm a primitive painter," he says, and I'm not sure whether that's with pride or defiance. But I wouldn't say he was another Gauguin, for example. For one thing, if he's painted the ladies of Northwood in the nude he's kept the pictures locked away in his back bedroom. Secondly, where Gauguin's pictures fetch a million or four Peter's are priceless. Or do I mean impossible to price?

Dear old Peter. Apart from a little expansion around the midriff and the loss of a little hair he is still the big, gentle generous friend in 1988 that he was in 1955. If he doesn't enjoy his retirement immensely a lot of us are going to be very angry with him, very angry indeed.

## Burning desires

Alastair Burnet hasn't for twenty-one years, Julia Somerville used to but doesn't now, Alastair Stewart still does, and Mike Nicholson only did in the lavatories at school.

Smoke that is.

The results of ITN's survey on smoking show that a simple majority of our colleagues either don't smoke or wish they didn't and by implication feel that there should be at least a partial ban.

And there's the rub.

Should ITN institute a complete ban now? Probably not. Better a war of attrition. Smoking could be banned in the canteen immediately and the cigarette machine removed from the seventh floor.

From August 1 make **not** smoking at ITN a condition of employment for **new** members of staff.

Also make it clear that the new building will be smoke-free. Were ITN to do this, the law would be on its side. An industrial tribunal ruled recently that a company which gave its work-force four months' notice that it would ban smoking had acted reasonably.

However, ITN can and should offer help to those who want to give up. The company has after all helped staff members with other addiction problems.

And just for the record, I'm not a born-again non-smoker, like Mark Twain I have found giving up easy. Sadly, I have found it just as easy to start again. **Jack Bryan**

## Sharpening our edge

When a man like Phil Bye goes into print on what makes a cameraman of the year, operations managers sit up, take notice and study every word.

Phil modestly praises "the real heroes", the lighting assistants, one whizzing to and fro with tapes, another fighting through a very nasty riot and arguing his way past police road blocks to get the cassettes to the editor. (*Lens* edition No. 27.)

Phil's tribute is obviously heart-felt, and I echo it. ITN

has a long history of courageous and streetwise lighting assistants who have helped keep crews safe, and helped get many a story on the air. I know it from personal experience.

But let me reassure Phil and others with similar worries: the new technology and our new way of working will not blunt our competitive edge. They will sharpen it.

The one-man band won't be imposed regardless. The norm will be a traditional pair but better equipped, with two new-generation cameras; and if we need a three-person crew to get the story faster than the BBC or because of safety, there will be a three-person crew.

In the past, the third crew member has been disadvantaged; if he ever gave any extra help to the cameraman and recordist, that was unofficial and often contrary to union rules. In future, the third crew member will have the training and will be encouraged to take a full part in the crew's activities. Better for the crew as a whole, and better for the individual's job satisfaction and career prospects.

So, the new equipment and the end of the old demarcations should help us maintain that winning run of cameramen at the RTS well into the Nineties.

And the BBC? Well, I understand the opposition are deeply dismayed by our plans, and are trying to work out how they can scramble to catch up.

**Derek Taylor**

## Potted history

It was a wet and miserable morning, the daily paper had just come through the letter box – all wet and soggy – and I was feeling about as bright as the weather. "Oh for some sunshine or something to brighten me up," I mused, sipping my early morning cup of tea. And then it happened. The postman arrived with the mail and the latest edition of *The Lens*. Immediately my spirits rose in anticipation of some interesting reading and perhaps news of old colleagues and friends. And then, briefly scanning the pages, I saw it – my cartoon! That did raise my spirits. "Fame at last," I said to my wife. "I'm in print. I feel better already." Some of the older staff (in both senses of the word) will no doubt remember that I dabbled in painting, a hobby which I still pursue in my retirement. Recently I have tried my hand at pottery which, though not much good at, is another interest and provides some humour. I wonder what hobbies other staff have – it would be interesting to know. Your front page story certainly had me fooled for a time – until I realised the date! Had the male staff members taken to wearing the kilt it could have caused some confusion in times of need! (See cartoon.)

**Doug Amor**

## Canny way to live

We in the photographic department read your April Fool's joke with interest. But

of course, we spotted the joke in a flash. The idea of moving to Scotland is absolutely absurd. Who would want to go and live in a place completely surrounded by beautiful countryside? Who would want to wake up every morning to the sound of birds singing in their trees rather than cars roaring by their door?

And worse than that you could go for a pleasant walk through fields full of flowers, fresh air and views unobstructed by the latest style of skyscraper. How would we cope especially bearing in mind you still get change from a fiver after buying the whole pub a drink in the local which, rather than turf you out at exactly 11pm, has a blatant disregard for opening and closing hours.

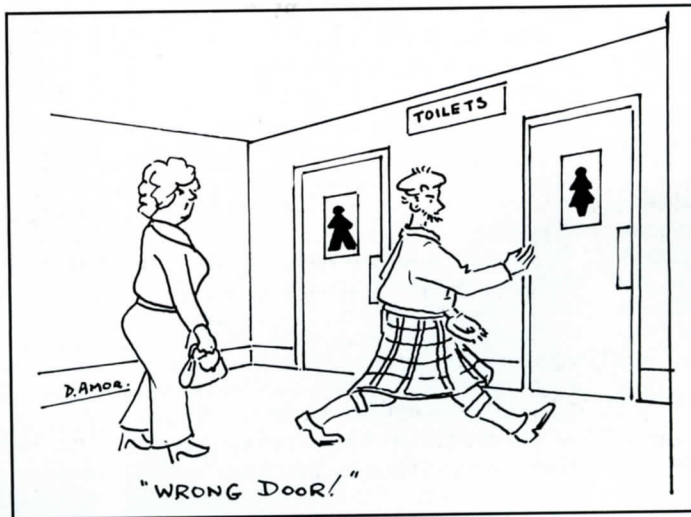
Who in their right minds would want that in preference to the streets of London where litter, lead pollution and your local neighbourhood mugger come free of charge. Not to mention the chip paper in the face on a windy day. Who would want to swap traffic jams, or forcing your way on to a crowded tube for the next bout of stale air for a pleasant walk to work down a cobbled street.

Who would want to own a Scottish castle for £25,000 when you are quite happily renting the equivalent of a drip tray of a fridge for £75 a week or are contentedly buying a rabbit hutch for £80,000 which backs on to a railway line and is three hours' drive from work. Who would want to swap hours of discussions on house appreciation and best areas to buy in for the quiet contemplation and satisfaction of fishing on your doorstep.

For staff with children the prospect is even worse. Their children could wander around quite happily having no need to worry about "strangers", getting lost or getting the last bus home.

The more we think about it the more we're convinced anyone who would want to swap London for Scotland must be a real April Fool!

**Photographic department**



# NAB Convention

by Peter Marchant

Not even the Las Vegas Convention Centre, the largest in the world, was big enough to accommodate this year's NAB convention. The American National Association of Broadcasters organises this annual jamboree of technical exhibits, lectures and workshops and it's like a scaled-up version of the British IBC exhibition usually held in Brighton or the Montreux Symposium in Switzerland.

The floor area devoted to the exhibition of broadcasting equipment was half a square mile—equivalent to about fifteen football pitches. A thousand manufacturers were represented on almost as many individual exhibition stands. At NAB the whole transmission chain was on display from studio goodies and gadgets to transmitter towers and tackle.

But, what was the show about this year? It was certainly about technology and automation. There were CCD studio cameras, automatic action-tracking panning heads, self-focusing zoom lenses and Basys controlled Betacarts.

A significant degree of co-operation was evident between Sony and Ampex with Sony showing its versions of the Ampex D2 digital video recorder and in return Ampex showing its versions of the entire Betacam range. Together,

Sony and Ampex are a force to be reckoned with but on the other hand Panasonic and JVC go from strength to strength with the quality, price and range of their competing MII video equipment. The battle of the formats is by no means over.

Panasonic showed the first all digital ENG Camera and spoke openly of its development of a digital 1/2inch tape system, although that's still a few years away. But such trends begin to show that digital technology for field use may not be as far away as we thought.

Quantel announced "Carousel" a sort of poor man's "Harry" which can be added to paintboxes to provide 12 seconds of animation storage and BTS showed the first full facilities CCD studio camera, the LDK900.

Sony and Ikegami showed high resolution ENG cameras, whilst others showed high sensitivity CCD cameras.

There were giant versions of Betacart for use as on-line videotape libraries holding upwards of 4,000 cassettes. There were mixers, editors, lights, batteries and more . . .

But for us the high point was the BVW200, a one-piece ENG camera, a camera to beat them all. They called it the "cameraman's camera", a bold claim indeed but possibly true.



**What is it about John Suchet's expression that leads us to believe he's thinking if you can't beat 'em, you might as well join 'em. Or perhaps he is taking to "apeing" his interviewees. For the real story see page three.**

**Just desserts** continued from page 7 he worked for the Leader of the GLC, and it blossomed during his time at the DoE and the House of Commons.

But even before that he was building up invaluable experience for his future career. After graduating from Bradford University he worked for National Opinion Polls and MORI learning all aspects of market research and producing and interpreting political opinion polls. As a trainee he did all the usual jobs. "I really enjoyed going out with my clipboard and asking questions. And when you're facing someone you recognise the sort of bloody stupid question designed by a smart Alec at a desk in London who

forgets some poor devil has actually got to ask it in somebody's front room."

And more recently I have learned from sources at the House of Commons that David Cowling is remembered there with awe. Legend has it that he was once seen in the "Policemen's Canteen" scoffing

three helpings of bread-and-butter pudding in one sitting.

ITN, never slow to take the opportunity to make history, can announce that David Cowling today surpassed that and has eaten 2 three-course meals and has just scoffed my slice of chocolate cake.

**Give me twenty a day  
That's all I require  
To set me on my way  
To my own funeral pyre  
And there shall I rot  
Like a wizened old hag  
And deserve all I got  
From the cool mellow fag**

The poem, left, was sent in by Kim Lacey. Do you think you can do better? If you have any ideas for features, topics or profiles that you think ought to be tackled by *The Lens*, or if you would like to volunteer to write any articles, please contact the editor Susan d'Arcy on Ext. 2475.



Caption this picture

## CAPTION COMPETITION

This is the first caption competition in what we hope will become a regular series in *The Lens*. There will be a prize of a bottle of wine for the winning caption. All entries to be received by the Press Office by July 15.

CAPTION: .....  
.....  
.....  
NAME .....  
DEPARTMENT .....  
EXT No. ....

