

# ITN chairman chosen for top broadcasting job

George Russell, the former chairman of ITN, told *The Lens* that his first meeting as the new chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was a case of "business as usual" for him.

He explained: "I've been through it all for years before as a member, but I have been away from the IBA for two years so it was really a sort of *deja vu*. It was good to meet the new members and get down to making some decisions." He said that the main concern of the authority was obviously to respond to the Government's White Paper on broadcasting by the end of February.

Earlier in the month he had attended a dinner held in his honour by ITN. "It was one of the best nights I've had. It was sort of a hello and goodbye really. Because the workload at ITN was so heavy, I didn't get to say more than hello to some people so this was rather a nice finish.

"Of course I will still be in contact with ITN for obvious reasons. I am very much looking forward to the challenge facing us at the IBA. There was a lot of the excitement at ITN during the past nine months at the changes taking place. I think it will be the same here now."

David Nicholas said: "No one could have better credentials for the job. He served as a member of the IBA for seven years and his links with Channel Four, ITN and Basys have given him an intimate knowledge of broadcasting. He has an impressive



**Russell: influential post**

record as a successful industrialist and has been described as one of the best managers of change in the country.

George Russell has been a personal friend for many years. His short time as chairman of ITN has been during a particularly sensitive period in the company's history. It has coincided with completing the financing of our new building; during the decision-making time before publication of the White Paper; and through the Super Channel troubles.

Throughout this time he has been warmly supportive of the management and has been a true ITN patriot. Though I am sorry to lose my close working relationship with him I could not be more pleased that someone who cherishes good broadcasting is going to be at the helm."

## INSIDE

**WORLD NEWS:** Nigel Dacre tracks the latest events around our satellite service. **PAGE 3**

**THE RTS SYMPOSIUM:** Huw Roberts on the Birmingham conference into television post-White Paper. **PAGE 4**

**SMOKING AT ITN:** Dr Konrad Kotowski reports on smoking-related diseases. **PAGE 5**

**THE NATO AWACS:** Patrick Hilliard writes about his trip to see the high-tech plane. **PAGE 6**

**LETTERS:** The great debate over the voluntary smoking ban continues **PAGE 8**

**TOP TEN STORIES OF THE YEAR:** The news items ITN voted most important throughout the year. **PAGE 9**

**FLYING:** Martin Crawley takes us through the thrills and spills of learning to fly. **PAGE 11**

**ITN DOWN UNDER:** John Hartley tells how we link up with Australia. **PAGE 12**

**NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS:** Kate Sissons discovers who has resolved to do what for 1989. **PAGE 14**

**SPORT:** Brian Pendry closes the golf season. **PAGE 16**

**PLUS.....**news, information and pictures of ITN celebrations.

# ITN appointments and internal promotions

ITN has welcomed several new full-time staff over the past few weeks, these include: Garry Imlach and John Leonard (television journalists); James Lockhart (payroll clerk); Marion Burns (News at One writer); Les Skipper (writer); Tim Morley (development engineer) and Michael Flook (project engineer).

As well as the new recruits, there has been a number of internal moves. Nine members of the ENG lighting section have been appointed to the posts of ENG recordists. They are Partick

Hilliard, Gary Mullins, Steve Padwick, Ian Richardson, Dave Prime, Tim O'Connell, Rob Dukes, Jack Ward and Richard Berridge.

The recordists have now started a training period which will last for more than two months. Three lighting assistants, Trevor Evans, John Heslop and Frank Hilling, will be retiring before April when the news gathering format changes to Beta SP and the new working practices come into effect in the ENG section. The four-strong ENG lighting section will then consist of John Bennett, Geoff Brennan, Ken Tilley and Ron Gaisford.

In the assignments department, Mandy Wood, formerly acting assignment manager who has been in charge of forward planning in assignments for the past seven months, has been confirmed as assignments manager. Leigh Missen, presently an assignments assistant, assigning Channel Four News crews, will join Christine Hogg and Gilly Poole as a duty assignments manager in February, when Bobbie Mayes leaves ITN.

As well as this Robert Davidovitz, formerly a facilities assistant, will assist John Flewin in sectional administration and planning, and, in due course, stand in for other assignments managers.

Those leaving the company include Leo Rosenberg, Mo Davies, Shaun Gilmartin, Peter Godden, John Heslop, Eric Hind, Ted Playle, Dierdre Ryle, Sarah Seldon, Alf Wilson and Tony Wolf.

# Tribute to Bob Learmonth



**Bob Learmonth, the news information supervisor, died in December from a heart attack. He was 50 years old and leaves a widow Gillian, a son Ian and a daughter Samantha. He joined ITN 20 years ago from the Guardian. He had recently been elected chairman of the ITN sports and social club committee. Here Mike Chandler writes a personal tribute to Bob...**

"I made it! I'm in!" The office door would slam and a figure lumpy in wind-proof coveralls and crash helmet would clump in. His bike keys would be dropped casually on a desk. The battered blue shoulder bag would be dumped unceremoniously in a corner, half spilling its contents onto the floor. After prising himself out of his helmet, he

started a series of Houdini-like contortions to fight free of his Belstaff gear. It would follow the bag in a heap on the floor. Next, the waterproof boots were kicked off and the morning ritual of 'Hunt The Shoes' started. Cigarettes and lighter appeared. "Right. I'm in. Trolley been yet? Good. I'll get some breakfast and have a read of the Guardian." Bob had arrived.

Bob radiated good humour. The sheer exuberance of the man washed over you, carried you along on a wave of cheerfulness which never ebbed. He was the kind of man you could meet for the first time and within minutes feel you had known him all your life. It was more than just a knack for making friends. It was the ability to make you believe he had always been your friend, you just hadn't realised it until you met him.

## Guaranteed fun

Bob was never happier than when he was organising a social event. Many times just knowing Bob was going to be there was enough to make people come along. Whatever Bob had arranged was guaranteed to be fun!

He had this smile. Impish, I suppose, if a man over six feet tall can be such a thing. A guileless, open grin, so full of honest humour you just couldn't be miserable around him. Bob saw the funny side in everything. Couple that with an infectious bubbling laugh and you had an irresistible combination.

As a supervisor, he had a relaxed, easy-going way that was deceptive to those who did not know him. No matter how frantic the pace, Bob sailed along at his own calm speed. But the work always got done, the answers always found well before the deadline. All the panic washed around him and he exuded a sense of stability to his workmates.

## Generosity

As a friend, there are many things I treasure. The way he looked when I asked him to be my daughter's godfather. His expression at her christening, when he held her in his arms; the evening darts games at the Crown and Sceptre; sitting in the living room at his house watching Monsieur Hulot's Holiday for the third or fourth time, and Bob's laughter making us all find something funny in it yet again; the long talks in my local on a Sunday evening discussing anything from football to philosophy over pints of cold lager; his generosity, his kindness, and most of all the way he made everything fun.

Every time the office door opens we look up, half expecting it to be him. The place is curiously tidy now. No tangle of casually discarded motorbike gear. No boots to trip over. No more hunts for his bike keys, or credit cards, or darts, or lighter, or whatever it was he couldn't find right then. It's curiously quiet, too. But that's because the laughter's gone away.

ITN stopped producing World News programmes for the Super Channel satellite network last November. Nigel Dacre, the World News programme editor, describes what has been a turbulent period for his department.

## Where the super has gone from Super Channel

**"Battle-hardened" is how one ITN executive recently described the ITN World News team.**

But it is a credit to the fifth floor journalists and production staff that during all the recent "battles", the quality and professionalism of the programme never suffered. Indeed, just before we came off Super Channel, the Daily Telegraph said, "The one untarnished jewel in the Super Channel crown remains its ITN news service."

We're now left with the task of trying to build up enough new outlets to put the programme on a sound financial basis.

At the moment, the programme can be seen on a cable network in America, on satellite TV in Japan, on ITN's early morning 5.00am news and on British Airways flights.

But many other broadcasters are now expressing interest in including the programme in their schedules. For instance, the programme's presenter John Suchet and I recently went on a sales tour in northern Europe - where a number of TV stations are thinking of transmitting the programme late at night.

Our main selling point is that the ITN World News has carved out a distinctive identity on the world TV market. Unlike most other news programmes, it concentrates on **international** stories - from an **international** perspective.

The programme contains the follow-

ing sections: world news, business news, a special report and an international newspaper review. It is put through the studio at 22.05 each weekday evening - and can be seen the following morning on ITN's internal TV system at 11.15.

As for our former viewers on Super Channel, we've received many letters and phone calls from people saying how

much they miss the programme.

A viewer in Brussels said it was a "tragedy" that ITN was no longer on Super Channel. A letter from Berlin said "Where's our Super Channel News? How are we going to manage?"

And from West Germany: "I am very upset. My wife misses John Suchet's smile. Thanks for doing such a good job over the last year."

## Record-breaking year at Basys

As part of an occasional contribution from ITN subsidiary Basys, Jay Andrews briefly sums up its 10th anniversary year.

**Before Christmas, Basys celebrated the close of its 10th anniversary year. During the year Basys established itself as the industry standard for broadcast newsrooms. By another happy coincidence, it was the year in which Basys saw its best performance worldwide: record sales, record revenue and record expansion.**

Basys now has nearly 200 installations worldwide - up from a mere seven five years ago. While it kept its market lead in the States and promises yet greater things in Australia, the most notable success in 1988 has been in Europe.

Here, Basys International has nearly 90% of the market, mostly gained during the past 18 months. Twelve out

of the 13 state broadcasters chose Basys when computerising their newsrooms.

One strong factor for the international success of Basys has been its development. Last year the Lugano studios of Swiss Broadcasting went on air with a Basys system that controls video production from input on VCRs to output on Betacart, while TV2-Denmark was the first European station to control a Betacart directly from a newsroom system.

Sky TV News chose Basys - as did Channel Nine News in Australia - for its technical advances: both installations will incorporate new multi-screen VAXmate workstations running X-window programmes. These allow users to call a multitude of different sources on the same screen - a producer might, for instance, compare an earlier running order with his existing one in two separate "windows" while looking at a journalist's script in a third and searching a remote database for background data in a fourth.

This year ITN will become the first European station to run on the powerful VAX 8250s from the Digital Equipment Corporation. With the addition of networked concentrators, ITN journalists will find the speed of their system greatly enhanced. The system will also be linked to ITN Basys archive system.

ITN is also keeping a close eye on the Basys Machine Control System, which will eventually allow all studio equipment - cameras, lighting, stillstores, caption generators as well as videocarts and teleprompters - to be controlled from a running order and in effect "triggered" from journalists' scripts.



Basys at Swedish Radio, one of more than 60 installations in Europe and almost 200 worldwide

# Socks on the Box

Huw Roberts shows his true colours at the RTS symposium.

Friday November 25th: to Birmingham for the first RTS symposium with a serious purpose - to discuss "Television after the White Paper". That may be a little unfair - the RTS probably had serious and useful discussions in the days before it was hi-jacked from the engineers by ex-programme-making talkaholics.

Your correspondent demonstrated his underdeveloped appreciation of the nuances and niceties of this business by wearing canary yellow socks when the red variety was de rigueur. The enormity of my mistake was driven home when our man Sissons in scarlet hose, chairing a session featuring similarly attired Mr M Grade (prop: Channel 4), admitted that Mr Grade had approvingly called Peter's socks "a shrewd career move".

This symposium really did have a point, and most of the sessions were rich in information, bringing us some illuminating forecasts of the audience pattern in coming years and exposing us to the views of investment analysts. The least satisfactory session was, not surprisingly, the most traditional. Sourly serious Stuart Prebble of World in Action, played "my tape's better than your tape" with jaunty Jane Hewland, LWT's current affairs boss, and a staunch advocate of the infotainment school of television journalism.

**"Mr Grade had approvingly called Peter's socks a shrewd career move"**

As they swapped highly selective clips of crass programmes, and traded insults, they quite missed the point that after the White Paper, neither of them might survive. They also missed the point made by Peter Sissons, while chairing a later session, that there are inherent dangers in combining information and entertainment on a regular scheduled basis, the biggest threat being the need for objectivity, and time-consuming research.

While I should have been watching that points-rich game Barbarians v Australia in Cardiff, another displaced Welshman, CBS's Howard Stringer, was amusing and bemusing us with his anecdotal guide to "Living with Competition". Perhaps the most telling theme of this session was Howard's in-

sistence that quality counts, and repays long-term backing. That message of hope may have missed the doom merchants, because the dominant impression was of the trauma of dropping to third place in the US networks. I suspect Mr Stringer will reverse CBS's decline, after all, he has already fulfilled Lord Carrington's timeless piece of advice if you want to succeed, start by inheriting failure.

## Slice of the cake

Chris Irwin, the Coordinator of Planning and Development in the BBC's Policy and Planning unit, preceded Howard Stringer. On the face of it, Mr Irwin's analysis of the short-to medium-term prospects for the industry was quite reassuring. He saw BBC's 1 and 2 holding about 42% of the 1994 audience, the same as ITV Channels 3 and 4. That's 84% of the cake for the existing players (or should it be diners?).

Old facts are given new significance when one looks into a post-White Paper future. Bob Phillis' Carlton Communications is richer than all the ITV companies put together, but that didn't protect it from being treated as a somewhat peripheral player in the old scheme of things. Not anymore, however - Phillis shared the platform with Bronwen Maddox, media analyst with Kleinwort Benson, and a businessman called Richard Dunn, who looked remarkably similar to the boss of an old-style ITV company called Thames, but who spoke in a new and wonderful language of profits and losses, balance sheets and banks - his vocabulary looks a real prospect for a Lingaphone course, judging from the uncomprehending looks on the faces of most of the audience. Actually, there were a few who did understand - from firms like BZW, whose deep financial involvement in the media business has been the subject of recent newspaper stories. There certainly seem to be enough commercial opportunities in the new scheme of things to attract new



Huw Roberts

finance, and existing expertise - either in running a TV company, or programme-making - will be a saleable commodity.

## Trading places

The symposium ended with the title theme "Television after the White Paper". Colin Shaw, newly appointed director of Lord Rees-Mogg's Broadcasting Standards Council was a surprise addition to the glittering panel. He reminded me of one of those fireball decoys that the Russian MIG's discharge as they hurtle across Afghanistan valleys. They are intended to draw the heat-seeking Stinger missiles that the Mujahideen throw at them. The audience was like putty in Mr Shaw's hands, welcoming his liberal interpretation of the role of the BSC. My only worry was, whose Stingers was he there to draw - ours, or the Mrs Finchley/Mary Whitehouse brigade?

Perhaps the most illuminating moment of the whole weekend came when BSB's newest recruit, John Gau, addressed the gathering. Mr Gau prefaced nearly all his predictions about BSB, by saying "Fingers crossed - we will...".

This seemed to amuse the scattered financial experts amongst us, and led Richard Dunn to advise the BBC to wait patiently for BSB to expire before buying up a ready-made satellite service at bargain basement prices.

Mr Gau also embarked on an over-extended shopkeepers analogy. The BBC is Harrods, we are John Lewis, I think, and they were avoiding becoming Tesco's, if I remember correctly. Bob Hunter sat in front of me for two days, uncharacteristically silent. I felt like getting Mr Hunter to use his knowledge of West End topography to tell his new boss that if you turn your back on ITN, and walk briskly away down Wells Street, you finish up in Berwick Street market.

Welcome to market trader television...

# Three hundred people killed today

News has become almost a "glamour" occupation, with News at Ten having one of the highest TV audience ratings. Many items refer to disasters - manmade and natural; and much sympathy is invoked for the victims of earthquakes, train crashes and famines.

**"If you stop smoking the risks fall by 50% over the first year and almost to that of a non-smoker after 10 years"**

As ITN's voluntary ban on smoking comes into action, Dr Konrad Kotowski, ITN's medical adviser, outlines some of the reasons why we should think seriously about stamping out the habit.

I wonder what the reaction would be if the news headline "Three hundred killed today" was repeated every single day - that is the effect that smoking has. Would we react positively for a few days and then become bored and switch to another channel, or perhaps do something about it?...

Smoking is responsible for about 15 to 20% of all deaths in Britain. In fact, of 1,000 25-year-olds in England and Wales who smoke 20 cigarettes a day, one will be murdered, six will be killed in road accidents and 250 will die - or be killed - prematurely by tobacco. Most of the 250 will succumb to lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and emphysema (chronic obstructive airways disease) or coronary heart disease.

Nearly 90% of lung cancer cases are related to smoking; while 90% of deaths from chronic bronchitis are related to the habit - 19,000 people die from this illness each year. As well as this the risk of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the UK, is increased by 10 to 15 times in men



Dr Kotowski

under 45 who smoke 20 cigarettes a day.

There is a significantly increased risk of lower limb amputation, strokes, duodenal and gastric ulcers (smokers also take longer to heal and have increased chance of recurrence) as well as low weight in babies born to smokers and increased mortality in the perinatal period of up to 30%.

But if you stop smoking the risks fall by 50% during the first year and to almost that of a non-smoker after 10 to 20 years.

Smokers should also bear in mind the effect on non-smokers. Various surveys suggest that in 100,000 non-smokers regularly exposed to tobacco smoke, there will be an increased risk of up to three cases of lung cancer. As about one third of the UK adult population smokes, this represents several hundred - or more - unnecessary cases of lung cancer each year.

## Extra years

Stopping smoking is not easy. My advice on giving up is to define a start or stop day; ask for support from friends and partners; and try alternative cures such as acupuncture, nicotine chewing gum, hypnosis, worry beads or a different diet.

The often quoted side effects of giving up: increased weight, "craving" for tobacco and increased coughing do eventually settle. And the end results - extra years of life and health - do justify it ... don't they?

## How to stop smoking

**Giving up smoking is a personal decision. There are no miracle cures but some people find it helps to talk it over with other people in the same situation. Joining a "quit-smoking" group may be the answer!**

There is a five-evening course to help you break the habit, the ITN personnel office will book a place for you.

On the first evening you think about smoking and what it means to you, then you discuss attitude and motivation to giving up smoking before preparing to stop. There are hints to help you over the first few days without cigarettes and hints about staying "stopped". Everyone receives a workpack to go with the course, which is held at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, Cleveland Street, W1.

# Crash landing with a difference

Patrick Hilliard went on a trip to see the Nato Awacs (Advanced warning air control system) plane recently and tells us that fortunately the only thing that crashed was the computer system.



The team on the day

**Through the early morning mist of Geilenkirchen the strange shape of the Nato Awacs lumbered into the sky.**

Peter Blanchard, Neil Hamilton and I were standing not far from the runway, preparing to film several take-offs. Our civilian lady escort said, "You may film from here, but please, no nearer." As we were at least 50 yards from the edge of the runway, Peter (like any cameraman I've worked with) who would of course like to see the whites of the pilot's eyes, proceeds to leg it across the muddy outfield, dragging Neil behind him, closely followed by yours truly with tripod.

After filming two take-offs head on, Peter requests a position at the other end of the runway so that we will be directly behind the aircraft. Civilian escort thinks hard, "OK, but not too close."

## Deaf ear

Into our minibus and off down the taxi way. Now we have to hurry, the last Nato E3A to take off is already taxi-

ing. Our driver manages to get by without knocking any bits off, and gets us to the end of the runway with seconds to spare.

Civilian escort - "Not too close please." Peter cocks the usual "deaf ear" and we leg it again. We get in position.

Civilian escort from afar, "Too close, too close."

"Never mind her," says Peter "what's holding that plane up?"

## On board

The aircraft has come to a halt. This at least gives Peter time to level the tripod. Lady escort still practising semaphore. She catches up with us at last with a message from the pilot. "Could we please move back from our position as we were preventing him from going to work."

Well, with the safety of nations at risk, we comply.

Geoffrey Archer rejoined us after his briefing and it was our turn to take a ride. On board would be the first RAF crew trained to operate Awacs in

readiness for delivery of our own aircraft in two years' time.

Plenty of seats on board, but no windows and not much cargo space, which could have been a problem, because Peter being a clean-living lad, usually likes to take along the kitchen sink!

After take-off we head towards England and stooze around Norfolk while a little bit of the electronic wizardry is demonstrated.

We were split into two groups. Scribblers first, then Cameras. As there was only one ENG Camera, ours, and one Fleet Street stills man, it wasn't going to be too much of a scrum. "Ah yes, there's just one snag. We can't allow you to film the radar screens when they're on. Your camera could pick up sensitive noises, which could be analysed later, sorry" - so says our guide, an RAF wing commander. "But do step up now and we will show you what we can do."

## Computer hiccup

For the next five minutes, he proceeded to do just that, and very impressive it was too. Every airborne and sea surface movement is logged.

Suddenly we noticed an increase in button pushing. Our guided tour seemed to have ceased.

The Wing Commander - "Now you're not going to believe that this rarely, if ever happens - but the computer has crashed!! We'll have it back in a minute." Twenty minutes later, our guided tour resumes.

Peter asked the Wing Commander "Obviously in a time of conflict you are a prime target, do you have any means of defence?"

"I'm sorry Sir, that is classified information." We did actually find out later that all the crew have parachutes. Very useful when you know you have a missile locked on. Provided of course your user friendly computer is working.



Getting as close as possible

# Watching them... watching us... watching the news

Judy Lustigman was among the ITN staff members who kept a record of November 1. Here are some extracts from it.

**It's a 6.30am start for me today, I've got the job of looking after the Yorkshire Television team who've come to film us for the BFI Day in the Life documentary. The director, Peter Moore, has decided to concentrate on the making of News at Ten.**

**6.45** We're in the main newsroom, and it's virtually empty. Apart from the YTV crew and me, there's Mervyn Hall the home news editor, the foreign news editor and the cleaner. The poor man is being filmed from every angle as he Hoovers the same spot. I can imagine the commentary "And the only sound to be heard is the low hum..."

**7.00** The News at One newsroom is getting busy while the Into the Night newsroom gets ready to go home. Mervyn (aka Merv the Swerve) has had his mike put on. His every word is to be recorded for posterity. He is discussing what has happened over the last eight hours with the overnight news editor.

My first important job is going out to buy the coffees. I buy Merv a big one. Oops - he's just spilt his coffee all over the desk. I nudge the director and he tells the crew to film the action, Merv wiping his sodden newspapers.

Meanwhile, as part of this documentary an "award-winning" ITN crew is about to go out filming "death-defying" ITN cameraman - Sebastian Rich. Today is a wonderful chance for all those behind the cameras to become stars. They'll love it.

**8.00** (approx) the crews leave in their Volvos from the garage in the basement. I explained to Peter Moore that the gate goes up automatically and the crews drive out. He's got into his mind that it's like the beginning of Hill Street Blues. Think he might be a bit disappointed.



The YTV crew at work

**8.10** First meeting of the day. Deputy Editor, Stewart Purvis's office - the three news editor's senior home news editor, plus five or six from News at One.

I look at the cuttings to see what the newspapers have said about us in particular and about TV in general. Everyone falls on the papers for opinions of the 9 o'clock News revamp last night. Being as objective as possible we all thought it was dreadful. No sour grapes or anything, but it was certainly a mess, thought they'd gone on air before the set was finished.

Great - all the "big papers" have quoted from our Channel Four News interview last night with Jaruzelski.

Newsroom filling up nicely. James Mates was the first reporter in early

about 8am. No time to take off his coat, Merv has sent him off to cover public drinking ban in Coventry.

The award-winners and the death-defyer have gone off to cover Michael Brunson and Cabinet comings and goings. It's Lawson's autumn statement and the health service charges rebellion.

**10.30** meeting in the Editor's office. News editors give out their lists of what stories they are covering and then starting with Merv they explain the stories, logistics, who's reporting, how they're coming in etc. This is the bit that's bound to get into the documentary.

CONTINUED OVER LEAF

## The non-smokers hit back at the letter in the last edition of The Lens defending those who like to light up.

● Why did the writer of the letter "Fuming over the ban" (about smoking) in the last issue feel obliged to remain anonymous? I presume he/she is ashamed of trying to excuse the disgusting habit?

To suggest that we who object to other people forcing us to breathe smoke from their dangerous fags and exhaled fumes from their lungs (second-hand, as it were) are nevertheless willing to tolerate dog mess in the parks, gun-carrying in the United States and drunken driving is an extraordinary attempt to justify his/her own unsociable behaviour. I don't know of anyone (non-smokers or smokers) who does.

It looks like driving over the limit will soon mean instant imprisonment to satisfy public demand that it should be stopped. And, like me, many car drivers are spending money to "convert" to unleaded petrol.

I'll say it again - smoking is a filthy habit and I am prepared to sign my name to that!

**Frank Miles**

● As a non-smoker I would like to reply to the letter (I'm sorry I don't know from whom) in the last edition of The Lens which as usual presented irrelevant arguments in support of the smoking lobby.

The whole point of attempting to make ITN a non-smoking building is to improve the conditions that we work in. I don't have to contend with toxic car fumes, exhaust from lorries, drunken driving or dog mess at work, hopefully I'll never be shot either. These are not the issues at stake here. What is at stake is my right not to be a victim of passive smoking. I presume I have this right!

Like you I would not "ban dogs from the street nor cars from the roads". I would however ban them from ITN should the need ever arise. Also like you I would not wish to deny people the right to have a drink at work. However if it were the habit of drinkers to pour their drink over me every time they had one as smokers puff smoke over me every time they light up, I would feel as strongly about it as I do about

smoking - yes there are greater grounds for "selectively pursuing smokers than for banning alcohol on the company's premises".

Smokers - you - make my throat sore, my eyes sting and my hair and clothes smell. Quite simply I am sick and tired of it. Smokers do not have the right to inflict this on me; wherever do you get the idea that you do? I must ask, where does your concern for "necessary social compromise" really lie? Presumably it is the no-smokers who must make the compromise and learn to accept that we have to allow you to blow smoke over us whenever you feel the need for a fag. No way! We have had to put up with this problem for years. We are never supposed to complain because goodness me if we do we are accused of being zealots, of denying the poor victimised smokers their freedom, of hounding them even. Shame! What about our freedom? Our freedom not to be smoked over, not to be made to feel ill, to have our clothes smell, etc.

It is obvious that there is a serious problem here. I put it to you that the problem is not mine but yours and you must deal with it.

**Irene Long**

## DAY IN THE LIFE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

News at Ten's programme director is in. She's a legend, Di Edwards-Jones. Probably the best TV news director in the world. She's best-known for her vivid language. When I told her she would be filmed she said "F... that. I'd better not say F... then. F...ing nuisance."

Merv is having a ball as the star of the show. He and his newsdesk assistant, a glamorous brunette, have now been renamed Orson Wells and Joan Crawford. People keep coming up to him, and saying rude things into his mike about the YTV crew.

Is someone really going to listen to a total of 30 hours of him and Nick on tape!

Suddenly I see on our in-house intext monitors that an Italian group has bought Super Channel. Are they our saviours? I persuade the YTV director to interview Nigel Dacre, editor of Super Channel News. Questions are a bit dull. But I think Nigel was put off when the director started "Tell me John."

I order one tape of tonight's News at Ten for YTV. I must ask for sound recording of directors talkback.

The action is on now and we have to decide where and what to film, a bit of studio two where the inserts director

is putting together a piece; graphics designers discussing story with writer, reporter in VT editing, package coming in from Israel, so much, so busy ... so the YTV crew decides to go off for supper.

It's eight o'clock, two hours to NAT and they go off for an hour! Otherwise they're into golden hours.

**9.00** They're back and we're running. We follow Alastair Stewart into make-up. He's been in since this morning, presented the News at 5.45 and is now being re-done for News at Ten. I think "the viewer" believes this is when the newscasters day starts.

Back to the studio. YTV crew recorded the very short rehearsal and YTV director said enough, and went out. With 10 seconds to go I finally persuaded their director to get back in and film the recording of the "Bongs." After 15 hours of filming how could you miss the most recognisable bit. I hissed in his ear "you won't get another chance."

They set up in the control room at 9.59pm with writers and subs dashing in and out crashing into the YTV lights.

54321 - all going smoothly - story 3-teeth and specs - Peter Allen live? Nick Pollard deciding to risk it. Alastair realises he doesn't have the wording of

vote - could be a disaster - someone finds out and Alastair picks up his phone on desk and they tell him. Pollard goes for live vote. Goes in early and Peter Allen has to keep talking for what seems ages. He does brilliantly. Speaker starts, then long, long pause, then "Ayes... (or is it eyes)." Well played Pollard.

Story 4 - James Mates health reaction - DROPPED.

Story 5 - Sadler from Israel. In the minute his VTR story is running we see him on the monitor waiting white-suited in a hall in Tel Aviv, fine. We can hear him, great. But he can't hear us. But he's lined up for a live 2 way interview with Sandy with 30 seconds to go. Pollard "We'll have to drop it if he can't hear us." Disembodied voice "master control here, we can cue him from here." "No, we'll do it later." Five seconds to go and Pollard's on his feet "No, we'll do him live now." He's cued in but there's a delay of three seconds we, and 10 million viewers, see Brent waving frantically to an unseen body to get out the way. Then the voice - phew. My nails have gone. Brilliant producing, brilliant directing. What a team. At the end of an amazingly fraught programme Pollard smiles, wipes away the sweat and murmurs "Nice day at the office, dear?"



# The story behind the stories

Piper Alpha topped The Lens poll of the most significant stories of 1988. Those who made it their number one story felt that the impact and implications resulting from the explosion (North Sea safety and the issue of compensation for relatives) made it important as well as the scale of the tragedy.

But the improvement in relations between the East and West still rates highly within ITN House. Last year the Gorbachev/Reagan summit headed the survey, this year Gorbachev's reforms and further strengthening of ties with the West come second. The Russian also scoops the ITN person of the year title for the second year running. Kevin Dunn was one of those who put perestroika and glasnost first for the "vast implications for international relations". Mike Morris also put Gorbachev in front but his added comment "especially for the reporting by Sue Lloyd Roberts from Armenia and Latvia" may be open to claims of bias.

Still in the USSR, the earthquake in Armenia came fourth. Fiona Armstrong described it as "a disaster of



Piper Alpha

great immensity". Not all the news was bad news, however, and in the Gulf, at least, peace has finally broken out. Peter Wallace put the Iran/Iraq ceasefire third calling it the "end of a hopeless war". His list, not surprisingly for someone in the sports department, was headed by the Ben Johnson episode at the Seoul Olympics. "A drugs scandal that just might cure sport of steroids," said Wallace. While Artemis Pittas made Johnson's doctor person of the year for "managing to remain anonymous to the vast majority of the world".

Wallace's colleague Giles Smith was not so sporting in his reply to the survey. Top of Smith's poll was "The one minute forty story asked for by Andy Tilley (Lawrence McGinty's person of the year incidentally) at 11.45 from

the sports desk when he finds he's two minutes under." Followed by "The two minute lead story on News at One, drummed up out of nothing when the next best story is the weather forecast," followed by "The story with the most deaths in it and so on in descending order - preferably with the goriest close-ups."

## Winning loser

One loser who managed to make us forget the winners last year was Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards. John Curtis voted him person of the year for "getting the media to fall for it", Chris McHugh also put Eddie top of the year's personalities as did Ken Wells.

Many of the forms were completed before Edwina Currie finally resigned over the salmonella egg scare so her departure from the Health ministry did not rank highly, but Glyn Mathias put it fifth and Richard Lambert also gave her a mention, labelling her "the most eggspensive mouth in Britain". Undoubtedly the Lockerbie disaster would also have ranked highly.

Stories which were nominated by people but did make the top ten included Nelson Mandela's "phased" release from prison in South Africa; Benazir Bhutto's election; Barlow Clowes; Prince Charles's skiing accident; and the trapped Alaskan whales - "Who can forget them?" asked Robin Gould; while Robin Elias reminded us that it was the year that the Liberal Party finally bowed out of British politics.

Finally The Lens would like to thank all those who took part and remind those that didn't - there's always next year!

## ITN's Top Ten

- 1 Piper Alpha
- 2 Gorbachev's reforms
- 3 The Gibraltar issue
- 4 Armenian earthquake
- 5 Ben Johnson scandal
- 6 Bush election
- 7 Health service crisis
- 8 Iran/Iraq ceasefire
- 9 Bangladesh disaster
- 10 Broadcasting white paper

## Person of the year



# FRANK DUESBURY

**Frank Duesbury took on one of the toughest jobs of all at ITN. He used to laugh about it. That was his way. But I got close enough to Frank through innumerable phone calls over the past 20 years to know how deeply concerned he could be. "PR is a tough enough job in itself, but when you're handling journalists - Jesus!"**

I'll tell you why it was, is, so tough. Journalists eschew the very notion that **they** can be manipulated by anyone yet there are some who expect a press officer either to ensure that praise for their work appears in the national press or, if their behaviour has been less than circumspect, that it's kept out of the newspapers.

## Professionalism

Now Frank was a journalist - a bloody good one - and as an ex-Tanfield Diary man he knew the value and pitfalls of newspaper "gossip" better than anyone I've ever met. I sat next to Frank for many years - his early "office" was a desk in a corner of the newsroom - and listened to the man at work and admired him. He could manipulate journalists by wit and professionalism.

He established, against tough odds (including lack of space and

understaffing) the nucleus of today's press office. His first major success was handling publicity for ITN's coverage, under Nigel Ryan's editorship, of the first moon-landing. It was a story every newspaper in the world was reporting yet Frank made sure the right journalists watched David Nicholas's brilliant production that night and so ensured the historic ITN milestone got the press it deserved.

Frank wasn't a "gin-and-tonic" PR man; he would stay late into the night to Roneo press releases, staple them, type the envelopes, fill them, and even hand-deliver them. I was worried he would push his health too far. He did.

At one time he left and joined LBC - when it started up. Those of us who heard his brilliant farewell speech will never forget it. He illustrated with superb good humour, using his gift of mimicry, some of the reasons he was going. But he did it without malice (there was no malice in the man). It was sad to see him go then. It was marvellous when he came back. It's too sad that he won't come back this time.

## Dedication

His gift of mimicry has often had me doubled-up on a golf course, play interrupted to perform a multi-character re-enactment of some top-level discussion he had just had. Accents, tones of voice,



expressions, physical mannerisms - all there (men or women). He would unwind that way. He trusted me with confidences and I was proud of that.

But he couldn't always unwind and all that dedication to his job, borne of a love of ITN and journalism, called for a tougher heart than he had.

It so happened I was sitting in his beloved press office, on a visit, when the news of his death that morning came through. I sat there a while remembering his corner desk in the alcove in the newsroom in those early pioneering days. I looked about me to see how it had grown and was glad it's in such good hands.

**Frank Miles**

# KEN SMITH

## An appreciation of a Copytaster

**Ken Smith was the News at Ten copytaster during the programme's formative years - the late 1960s and early 1970s. Viewers said at the time that it was a most intelligent and adventurous programme, providing a subtlety in its news gathering that the opposition could not match. Ken certainly played his part in that.**

It is almost impossible to quantify the work of a copytaster. His strength lies in a constancy and reliability that can be counted on over many years; days and nights, exciting nights, dull nights, nights when there isn't a tailpiece, nights when there is one, with Ken somehow managing to pick one out of his copy basket just at that point

in the evening when things are flagging a bit.

The copytaster on a really busy night is almost, one might say, something of a monk in a madhouse. He is its calm unbudgable centre. Ken and I shared the task. When I was off he was on and vice versa. He was the man I heard about but never knew. Later I did come to know him better and then I discovered features of his life that perfectly confirmed his qualities.

I did not know before then, for instance, that he was a war time seafarer serving on ocean going tugs - the rescue service of the seas. He was a signalman, the receiver and sender of messages - so like copytasting. The sea leaves a mark on a man and also a particular quality. It leaves him the capacity of

folding his arms on life's problems, of showing a sunny nature despite difficulties. That was Ken.

He loved music, books and poetry. He was a contemplative person, and in a world where people make their reputations by what they do and **say**, he was not a man of many words. And that, it seems to me, is a strength and it takes a strong man to do copytasting well.

**Liam Hanley**

**If you have any stories or ideas that you think should appear in The Lens, or if you would like to write an article, please contact Susan d'Arcy on Ext 2475.**

# High-flying ambitions

Martin Crawley and Carol Barnes, pictured here, are two ITN people who have been bitten by the flying bug. Martin gives us a glimpse of what it's like in the cockpit.

**I thought learning to fly an aeroplane would be easy. After all, I had read all the right books. I knew how an aeroplane flew, what the controls did. I knew all the jargon, and most importantly, I had spent many a Sunday at Heathrow sighing at the effortless grace with which the giant airliners touched down.**

I couldn't have been more wrong! It is probably the most difficult thing I have ever tried to do. Remember your first driving lesson? Well, it's a bit like that but 10 times more complicated, and with one extra plane of movement to contend with. At first every control had to be searched for, and was operated gingerly. When you look into the cockpit to find the throttle, and then look out, the aircraft is pointing somewhere else. "Operate the controls positively," was my instructor's advice.

I'm learning to fly in a Cessna 150, a two-seater with high wings. It is described as "compact" which means you're touching shoulders with your instructor. It's a game little plane, and easy to fly, I'm told, (I'd hate to fly a difficult one, in that case.)

It was also disconcerting to hear the other students spouting jargon like, "What's the QNH then?", and, "There are lots of A10s below 500 feet today." How come they knew so much more than I did? They'd been attending Ground School which is necessary to pass the written exams like Air Law (it is illegal to allow passengers out of the aircraft whilst flying), Meteorology (ice forming on the wings in flight can *really* spoil your day) and The Aircraft, Technical (if the engine stops in flight, the aeroplane turns into a very cumbersome glider).

There are two flying tests: the General Navigation test, taken before the end of the course, and the General Flight test, taken as soon after the mandatory 40 hours in the air as your instructor thinks appropriate.

So 40 hours is the minimum and of those 10 must be solo. I was taken aback when Tina, my instructor, told me that most students do their first solo around the 10-hour mark. Mike, the school's senior instructor, made me taxi to a halt and got out telling me to do a circuit on my own. Unless you've sat alone at the controls of an aeroplane, knowing that once you're up there's on-



Carol Barnes, like Martin Crawley, enjoys flying

ly one way down, you won't know just how peculiar your stomach can feel. Mike's only consoling words were that he hadn't lost a student or an aeroplane yet.

It's worth all the fear though, for the sense of achievement when the knees stop rattling is unequalled by anything I'd previously experienced.

Only slightly less frightening was practising stalls, that is, when the aeroplane stops behaving like a flying machine and starts behaving like a brick. First, it's up to 5,000 feet where even the worst student can't do any damage. Pull up the nose, and throttle back the engine. Visually, apart from the view through the windscreen changing, there is no real clue to what's happening, but you can *feel* that the aeroplane is fighting to stay in the air. As if to reinforce that feeling the stall warning starts to warble, hesitantly at first, then with a note of rising panic. The controls are sloppy, and the aircraft doesn't respond to them. Suddenly the nose drops, and the seat drops away from under you. You can feel the straps holding you down, and the distant ground fills the windscreen. I was well briefed, did all the right things, and got the little Cessna under control.

"Right, back up to 5,000 feet, and do it again," said Tina.

I shall be starting the cross-country phase of the training soon, learning to navigate to other parts of the country, though the course is going a lot more slowly than I'd anticipated. I'm at the mercy of the weather, and if it's at all marginal then the lesson is cancelled. When I gain my Private Pilot's Licence, I will be able to fly a single-engine aeroplane, carrying passengers (though not for monetary gain - Air Law) anywhere in the world. My wife has stated categorically that she will not fly with me. My daughter will, but only if she can fly over a friend's house and wave. At this stage of my training, I don't know who is the wiser.

The cost of learning to fly will be anywhere from £2,400 to nearly £3,000, which includes the exams, tests, hours, ground school and learning materials, and depends upon the cost per hour of flying at your local school.

What next? Well, if my manager is reading this: "Chris I'll need a pay rise soon. I've been well and truly bitten by the bug, and will no doubt be thinking of buying a share in a small aeroplane..."

# ITN reaches the Outback

John Hartley discovers that even in the red centre of Australia people can tune into ITN news.

Nick Lockett Central TV



Watching the international news

**Being retired and having the leisure to observe and ponder some of the fine print of life, I even got round to reading the credit titles at the end of the TV news from Sydney's commercial Channel 9.**

I was intrigued to see that it was claiming exclusive access by satellite to ITN and Worldwide Television News (WTN), as well as the American ABC material. I wondered why. None of the other Australian TV channels carry end titles after the news.

On a recent visit to ITN, however, I learned from David Nicholas that Alan Bond's Nine Network is now a minor partner of WTN which has ITN and the American ABC as major partners. As Channel 9 is Sydney's top-rating TV news the captions assumed greater significance.

## Background

When domestic satellite proposals were being discussed in Australia in the late 1970s, particularly with a view to bringing radio and television to the Outback, people living in the remote areas were asked for their priorities for radio, television or telephones. They replied that their first priority was for a telephone; their second was for a telephone that worked; and their third was for a telephone that worked all the time!

The Australian broadcasting organisations, however, were somewhat tardy - largely due to cost -

in adopting the satellite. It took several years to get acceptance of the Visnews shared daily satellite news feed from overseas to Australia; and when the Australian government decided in 1977 to provide television to the remote areas it approved a scheme that involved chains of terrestrial repeater stations.

## Distances

When the ABC (as the national broadcaster) was given the go-ahead to implement this scheme we found that at any one time we would have some 3,300 video-cassettes on the move in the Outback using mining trains, four-wheel drive vehicles, and Bush-pilot planes to overcome the huge distances, droughts, dust storms, cyclones, and torrential rains and floods that are experienced there. It was not considered a very good idea!

With the cooperation of the Australian Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC) we were fortunate enough to find a spare spot-beam transponder on Intelsat's Pacific satellite and we devised a satellite system that would supply 60 small towns and communities in remote areas with ABC TV at a lower cost than by using repeater stations.

After the service had been running for about three months I visited an Outback town in Queensland where the awning on the town's only pub said, "Last cool beer for 184 kilometres." There I met a retired cattle drover nam-

ed Alf. He said he had been glued to the TV since it started and his favourite programme was the Two Ronnies. He said he had had only one problem: he could not work out how the two Ronnies changed their clothes so quickly between scenes!

The most interesting of the remote area TV licensees is "Imparja", a station wholly-owned by Aboriginals through the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) which already operates a successful radio station.

## Remote

Imparja won, against commercial competition, the exclusive commercial TV licence for the remote areas of Central Australia and comprising almost all the Northern Territory and South Australia. This is a huge area almost the size of Europe running from top to bottom of Australia. The potential audience is only 150,000 - of whom some 40% are Aboriginals - scattered in small towns, communities and isolated homesteads. Each night they can watch Channel 9's national news complete with ITN/WTN's titles relayed by Imparja by satellite.

So far Imparja has achieved an audience penetration of 60,000 through satellite dishes and transmitters it has installed, and through some 1,400 privately-owned individual dishes which provide a form of DBS.

No formal evaluation has yet been made of audience reaction to the Imparja service but Nick Lockett the chief "stills" photographer of the UK's Central Television who recently spent some weeks with Imparja while on a bursary from the Commonwealth Relations Trust, told me that there had been an enthusiastic response from Aboriginal audiences. Nick had been photographing some of the Aboriginal initiatives in broadcasting for exhibitions in Britain and Australia soon.

I asked him how the Aboriginals reacted to world news. Nick said he had been with an Aboriginal family at Yuendumu some 200 miles northwest of Alice while they watched the news. He said they were intensely interested in other people and had been rivetted during the programme, particularly during a story of dissidents in Russia.



Q U O T E S

- "They said nobody could be as squeaky clean as I had seemed. And, of course, nobody could."

**Frank Bough**

- "The British obsession with the weather should never be underestimated."

**ITN executive quoted in the Independent**

- "I am a capitalist with a socialist conscience."

**Robert Maxwell**

- "I can't explain it. I just don't feel he's dead, even after all this time."

**Nick Toksvig, friend of John McCarthy**

- "Once money begins to get tight, standards will begin to go down and that is the moment the council will be wheeled into action."

**Colin Shaw, director of the new Broadcasting Standards Council on its role**

- "I do not get much time to watch television, although I enjoy getting home in time to watch the news at 10 o'clock."

**George Russell, former ITN chairman**

- "The US networks have learnt a hard lesson: that competition without losers is like Christianity without a Hell."

**Howard Stringer, president of CBS**

- "I don't regret leaving the Nine O'Clock News. I didn't find it satisfying. I never wanted to be a newsreader."

**Debbie Thrower on returning to regional TV**

- "If censorship does not contribute to victory over terrorism, it is difficult to justify the price to be paid for its introduction."

**Roy Hattersley on the ban on broadcasting Sinn Fein supporters**

Scenes from the reporters' and the graphic department's Christmas parties

# "Keep talking to the Loonies..."

...that's Debbie Schooley's New Year resolution this year, she says they "make me feel sane!" But one person who has resolved to keep his mouth shut this year is her boss Alastair Burnet, he is going to "keep 1989 speech-free".

I was assigned to write possibly the most groan-making item that The Lens has yet attempted, to prise out of busy ITN employees their New Year resolutions. David Nicholas does not make resolutions; David Roycroft said "I don't want to play that game" sadly Norman Rees will not be making another resolution "because I always feel disgusted with myself when I break it"; the News At One team was "far too busy" to provide a one-liner, though Julia Somerville brightly told me that hers was "not to talk to the press office", a promising start indeed!

## Smoke-filled

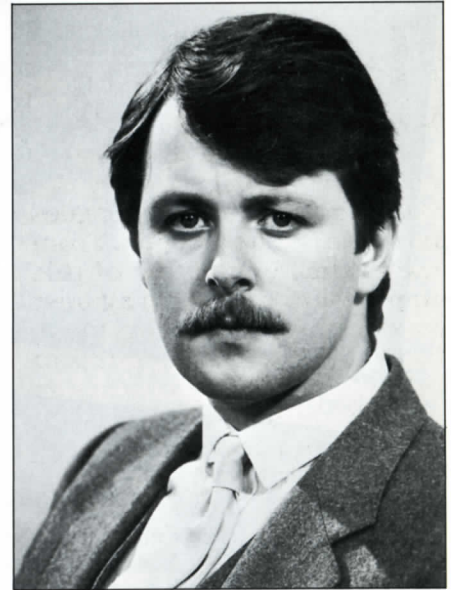
On January 1 1989 ITN House became a smoke-free zone. It seems that some employees find the concept of not inhaling nicotine during working hours too much. Hugh Whitcomb's New Year resolution is "to discover what a voluntary ban on smoking means" - looks like a lifetime of drawing on his favourite cheroots is not going to be an easy habit to break. Another smoke-filled mind is Alastair

Stewart's, he will "be attempting to abide by the democratic wishes of the anti-smoking brigade". After many days thought Mike Morris came up with a stunningly original resolution to "give up smoking".

Inevitably alcohol figures prominently in the survey - Jon Snow will diplomatically endeavour "to drink more and not query authority". Susan d'Arcy has promised to drink less "so I'm going to cut down on the tonic", and Huw Roberts was overheard mumbling something about being more pleasant to be with. By the New Year I have no doubt that John Toker will have found the turkey he won in the raffle at the reporters' Christmas party, and hid in a "safe" place at 45 Mortimer Street late that night.

Watch out Channel Four Mervyn Hall has resolved to "stop being so nice to the Channel Four newsroom", with any luck Nick Owen will not be around to suffer under Hall's new regime he says "I hope ITN doesn't mind, but my wife insists - and I agree - that I take more of my days off and holidays!" But I have no doubt that Steve Nicklin will keep things ticking over in Nick's absence as he has promised to "try and get in earlier than Ian Ross more frequently".

Ian Ross told me, "As one of the older (and I do mean OLDER) ITN hacks and an unrepentant Luddite, I shall strive (but not too officiously) to keep pace with new technology - like the typewriter and the telephone."



Would you buy a used car from this man?

The New Year will bring "service with a smile" from Cops, great comfort to those of you stuck on the end of a telephone line having waited half-an-hour for your cab. Abbey Cars giggled at the idea of a New Year resolution and told me that "Abbey Cars resolve to treat all cops, robbers and legitimate travellers with equal respect" - funny, I thought Jill Chisholm's taxi memos stayed inside the building! Talking about waiting, John Suchet has promised "not to lose my temper anymore waiting for the ITN lifts".

"To learn to think nice things about members of the Commons Select Committee on televising" - yes, you've guessed it Glyn Mathias in a positive mood. Political analyst David Cowling will be living life close to the edge next year as his resolution is "to vote no less than 40 times in one election".

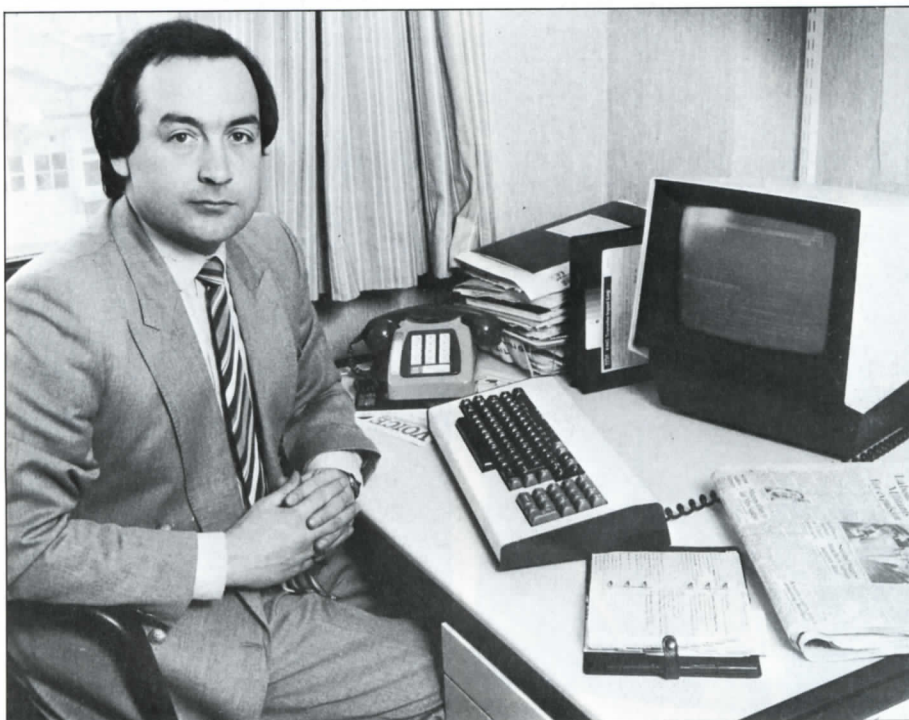
## Salesman

The Lens Award for Side-Splitting Honesty must go to Simon Cole whose "to stop looking like a secondhand car salesman" had them rolling in the aisles in the press office. Simon tells me that he is constantly being told by drunken colleagues that he looks like a typical South London type you wouldn't want to buy a used motor from.

That nice Richard Simons said he will endeavour to "see more of the press office". And finally, Judy Lustigman has promised... "to give up nit-picking (that's with a hyphen)".

Kate Sissons

Kate is now a reporter with the Evening Standard.



Getting hot under the collar trying not to smoke

# Drawing on the power of the ITN pen

Eric MacInnes finds out that shrewd ITN hacks use their pens for more than just taking notes.

The pen is mightier than the sword, or so the old saying goes - particularly the ITN pen. From time to time employees of this company have come up against sweating, angry Congolese pirates who, on production of said ITN pen, have untied the helpless civilians and thrown half a dozen scrawny chickens into the pot instead.

Or so I thought. Actually, the real stories are far more hilarious. At the Los Angeles Olympics, ITN arrived one morning at the stadium to find they'd not been allocated a camera position. After much fuss and six ITN pens a Japanese network crew were turfed out of theirs and ITN installed. That'll teach them to manufacture camcorders for use by one-man bands. Or, maybe the Americans did not want them to gobble up that last little bit of real estate.

During the special Commonwealth Conference on South Africa at Marlborough House, ITN staff distributed our pens to the women in

the Information Office. Understandably, the BBC was a bit miffed to find a little bit of ITN dangling around each woman's neck when they turned up for their shot at the photo-opportunity.

**“The BBC was a bit miffed to find a little bit of ITN dangling around each woman's neck”**

Last year in Algeria, after the Kuwaiti hijack, the ITN team was trying to make a quick getaway back to the old Blighty. However, no amount of persuading would get the local airline staff to accept 'plastic' for the tickets. It was cash - in any denomination as long as it was sterling or dollars and not local - or nothing. Yes, you guessed it,

once those ITN pens appeared ... the team was allowed to write a cheque? No, the airline workers produced a stencil machine from an inside pocket and bid them au revoir.

Also last year. There's the one, I heard secondhand, about a Bangladeshi man who was given an ITN pen. The man was ecstatic. The interesting thing is the man couldn't write.

Joy Johnson tells me one of the bosses of Pravda now has an ITN pen. On a recent trip to Moscow she swapped it for a beautiful book about the ancient city of the Csars. This goes to show there are still a lot of suckers around. They have problems getting pens in Russia. Mind you, up until the advent of glasnost, Pravda probably didn't use them much.

Putting in my own pen'orth, I once got a meal out of the Wimbledon Tennis Broadcasters' canteen for an ITN pen. It was my first day there and I was very impressed with the deal and the food. It was only later I discovered ITN paid several thousands of pounds for me, and others, to eat there.

## CAPTION COMPETITION



Can you think of a funny caption to go with this picture? It was taken last October when the Queen went backstage at the National to meet the cast of *The Tempest* after a gala performance to mark the National's 25th anniversary. If your entry wins, you could get a prize of a bottle of wine. Captions to the press office by February 25.

### Last issue's winner

The winner of the caption competition in the autumn 1988 edition of *The Lens* was Bob O'Neill from operation links who captioned the picture below. "I suppose a legover's outta the question?" Unfortunately, *The Lens* felt it did not merit the top prize of a trip to the Bahamas but Bob will take home a bottle of wine.



NAME: ..... DEPT.....

CAPTION: .....

.....

# The turkey treat for the golf club

by Brian Pendry

The penultimate meeting of the year took place at Roehampton and incorporated the traditional match against the BBC for the Ronnie Read Trophy. A team of eight from each society competed for the cup in memory of Ronnie Read, ITN's Royal Rota Cameraman of the Fifties and Sixties.

The recent merger of news and current affairs at Television Centre has produced one or two better golfers for the Beeb for they were good enough to win by 212pts to 205pts. The first time they have done so in five years.

## Long lay-off

Three other competitions took place, a nine-hole in the morning (ITN/BBC), as well as a joint ITN/BBC 18-hole competition and an ITN-only, 18-hole competition in the afternoon. The BBC took most of the honours in the joint affair but Chris Squires, with an excellent score of 43pts, won the Wally Moss Salver in the ITN-only event, prompting a "loads-a-money" schampoo celebration after dinner. (The Chief Constables of Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Hertfordshire have asked me to pass on their best wishes for Christmas and the New Year!)

The meeting was kindly sponsored by Crotan Electronics Ltd which was represented at dinner by Peter Harwood and Soraya Tandon.

The gap between October and March is far too long a lay-off for those of us who do not have membership of a golf club, and so, John Copleston's offer to sponsor a "Turkey Trot" was eagerly accepted by the committee, ever-keen to satisfy the insatiable golfing appetites of the 'new-breed' within the section.

## Fitting prize

"Bring a bottle, wine or spirit," it makes no difference said Mike Batchelor, "Everyone wins something." Who brought along the Castrol GTX, I don't know, but I suppose it was fitting that the sponsor should have won this at the after-dinner presentation. Doubtless, he will find it useful for his



Chris Squires who won the Wally Moss Salver

new Jaguar, bought to bolster his new managing director image!

Considering the time of the year, the course was in pretty fair "nick" with the understandable exception of the greens which were a little lumpy. That apart, conditions were pretty good.

A Turkey Trot is a fun round and to be fair a few of us were there for the beer but as always, the most competitive among us took the event seriously enough to produce some excellent scores. Jim Mitchell was in electrifying form scoring 44pts in a round of 72, six over par (or five over S.S.S.), not bad considering he duffed a couple of tee-shots and on one hole lost the club head of his five-iron which finished up in a bunker 75 yards up the fairway.

No excuses Jim, it should have been 50pts! Brian Foakes and Chris Squires, the two most improved golfers in the society pressed him hard for second and third spots. For the guests, Chris Rudge and Mark Seymour took the honours (Mark scoring 35pts off a handicap of eight).

## Prize giving

After golf, a high-tea which paid scant regard to Edwina Currie's salmonella warning - put back some of the expended energy before the president conducted the prize-giving ceremony.

At the end, the punters settled their bets with 'Squiresy' who had made book on the riders and runners before 'the off' the profit for which was suitably put behind the bar for general consumption.

A most appropriate way to end the year.

My thanks to everyone for a very enjoyable year. Have a Happy New Golfing Year. All the best.



Soraya Tandon, of Crotan Electronics presents Ronnie Read Trophy to BBC captain Brian Baker