A Life Rewound

Part Three

Chapter 17

1964 marked my fourth year planning – with my other hand – the programme with an unknown transmission date.

In 1960, the Queen had officially given her consent for Sir Winston Churchill to have a State Funeral, and the BBC and the Independent Television Authority were officially informed that detailed plans for the great event were about to be made available to the broadcasters.

It had been decided that regardless of the day of the week of Churchill's death, the funeral would take place on a Saturday. Rediffusion was the London weekday contractor, with ATV taking over at weekends, but the ITA instructed Rediffusion to handle this complicated outside broadcast. My boss, John McMillan, the Controller of Programmes, had asked me to take charge of this project as producer and controlling director on behalf of the whole ITV network. (This was shortly after the 1960 outside broadcast I had directed of Princess Margaret's wedding).

I gladly accepted this assignment. I was one of millions to whom Churchill was a hero figure; his World War II leadership saw to that. I had felt some pride, when after nearly four years wartime action in the army, I was picked from my regiment, The 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars, to be one of his guards at the Potsdam Conference in Berlin. Now, fifteen years later, by a strange coincidence, I was chosen again, but this time to take a more active role. Little did I realise what a mammoth task this was going to be.

It was certainly very odd to be involved in producing a programme with an unknown transmission date. The Duke of Norfolk, the Earl Marshal in charge of all major State Occasions, gave this project the codename, *Operation Hope Not*, and as the plot thickened, I heartily approved of that name.

Soon, an army despatch rider appeared in my office in Television House, Kingsway, and made me sign for a package that was going to be both my taskmaster and bible for the next five years. It was a heavy, purple-bound, loose-leaf book entitled Special District Order, issued by The Major-General Officer Commanding London District and the Major-General Commanding The Household Brigade. The Index made interesting reading. Looking up the Distribution List, I noted that I was in receipt of Copy 96. Copy 1 was assigned to the Queen, and Copy 302 went to the Control Officer, Regent's Park Barracks. There were 14 sections dealing in the most minute detail with the Route, Procession, Street Liners, Minute Guns, Bands, Ceremonies at Westminster and St. Paul's, Rehearsals, Administration, and so on. And in the back of this tome was a pocket containing 15 folded maps, underlining both the huge scale and the painstaking preparation for this event.

Outside-Broadcasts require three sorts of expertise: production, engineering and logistics. Rediffusion had some excellent people on the staff to take charge of the last two. There was the brilliant engineer, Basil Bultitude, and the ultra efficient administrator, Robert Everett, to name but two. I assembled a very modest production team. I recruited Graham Watts, a Rediffusion staff director, to take charge of finding

and negotiating camera positions, and to assist me during the actual transmission. A couple of years or so later, Brian Connell joined the team, as commentator. I had got to know him well when he was the anchorman for *This Week.* He was an immensely knowledgeable and erudite journalist, and was very supportive in backing me up when it came to deciding the style of the broadcast. Helen Littledale, an experienced staff researcher, joined me a bit later.

In ploughing through the District Orders, I soon became aware of the scale of this enterprise. It was going to be the largest State Funeral since the Duke of Wellington's in 1852, and over 7000 military personnel would participate. By comparison, the Monarch's funeral ceremony is modest; it was prescribed at the death of Queen Victoria, and has not changed since. But this one was going to be quite different. For a start, commoners don't qualify for State Funerals, but this was Sir Winston Churchill, and he had made sure that he was going to be given a grand send-off. I was told that once or twice, as time passed, he requested yet another marching band.

The day's events would start with the Bearer Party lifting the coffin off the catafalque in Westminster Hall, where it would have been lying-in-state for three days, so that the public could pay their last respects. The coffin would then be carried out into New Palace Yard and placed on the Gun Carriage, the very same that was first used at Queen Victoria's funeral. And with Big Ben striking 0945 hrs, coinciding with the firing of the first of the 90 minute-gun salutes – one for each year of Churchill's life – the Gun Carriage and its 140-strong Royal Navy Gun Crew would move off. And that would mark the start of the procession. I gleaned all this from the amazing Special District Order, and lots more besides. Did it matter that the total length of the procession would be 1,394 yards, comprising 2,299 personnel marching in slow time at 65 paces to the minute? It mattered – and how. Without this detailed information it would have been impossible to plan this unique outside-broadcast, which, as it turned out, would be seen five years later worldwide by many millions.

I asked Graham Watts to join me walk the processional route. With the purple loose-leaf book under my arm as a guide, we spent a whole day trying to come to grips with the obvious hurdles we had to overcome. With our starting point at New Palace Yard, we stepped out into Parliament Square, up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square and on to the Strand, Fleet Street and up Ludgate Hill to St. Paul's. The Procession would be brought to a halt there for the funeral service that would be attended by the World's leaders. After the service it would continue through the City of London, via Cannon Street, Eastcheap and on to Tower Hill. Then on to Tower Pier where the Bearer Party would carry the coffin onto the Port of London's launch, Havingore, for the start of the River Procession. On reaching the Festival Hall Pier, the coffin would travel by motor hearse the short distance to Waterloo Station. And then by train to Bladen, for the private burial service in St. Martin's, the Parish Church of Blenheim Palace,

We calculated that to achieve detailed coverage of all the events of that day, we would need to employ 45 cameras. A tall order – but we got the enthusiastic co-operation from eight other ITV companies from the regions, and the pooling of hardware and crews was to make it all possible. It meant, of course, that at very short notice, studios would have to be stripped of their cameras and shipped down to London with their directors, crews, engineers and back-up personnel. 300 people would have to be fed and watered, and hotels booked for a minimum of five days – and no one knew the date. Mercifully, other colleagues took on this logistical nightmare.

The search for camera positions could now begin. I was particularly keen to find one particular vantage point. As the funeral service in Bladen's village church was going to be private, with only Churchill's immediate family in attendance, the train's departure from Waterloo Station, bearing the coffin to its final destination, would mark the end of the outside-broadcast. I wanted my last shot to symbolise Churchill's exit from his beloved London and the whole Nation. I envisaged a scene, where the camera could show the train getting smaller and smaller as it disappeared into the distance. I had also learnt that British Rail would take an old steam engine out of retirement to pull the train. It was to be a Battle-of-Britain Class locomotive, named Winston Churchill. I hoped that, with a bit of luck, it would puff out lots of smoke from its stack so that the camera could follow its progress to the very last. We searched for a really high camera position – and found one.

The Shell Centre, on the South Bank of the Thames close to Waterloo Bridge, was under construction. It was to be one of London's highest office blocks. It was about two thirds complete with just the top third showing the bare steel structure. I spoke to the Clerk of Works and he told me that the whole complex was due to be completed in just over two years. I asked him whether he realised that he was constructing the tallest and most expensive camera platform ever, and after some more banter, he agreed to take me to the top in one of those scary cages running up the outside of buildings for workmen and materials. The view that presented itself was stunning, just what I had hoped for. Churchill had reached a good age; he was now 85 – could he possibly wait until all this was ready?

On our holidays, Jane and I were always accompanied by my small transistor radio just in case the magic transmission date for *Operation Hope Not* became a reality.

It is hard to recall now that all this planning for the State Funeral took place while I was fully involved making other programmes, including my long stint with *This Week.* The stylistic and technical aspects of such a mammoth enterprise became a constant preoccupation.

I was certainly able to keep an eye on the progress the engineers were making. The *This Week* studio had been designated to be the OB's control centre and as I walked into the control gallery every Thursday evening to direct the live transmission of *This* Week, I was always struck by the gradual increase in the number of television monitors in the gallery. As time went by, their number was to grow from a modest 6 in 1960 to a frightening array of 25, in time for the outside-broadcast – whenever that was going to be. The studio was in Rediffusion's Television House, and its location in Kingsway was just about halfway along the processional route. Being the control centre meant that all the signals, vision and sound, plus control and communication lines from all the sub-units along the route, had to terminate in this studio. This was a huge engineering effort; it meant a massive digging up of London's streets to bury the cable ducts underground. The post office was responsible for this; in fact, they owned these lines and ITV had to pay a fortune to keep them booked for an indefinite period. Nowadays, of course, all these remote signals would be squirted up to a satellite and linked back to a dish on the roof of Television House.

I was beginning to have thoughts about the overall style of the programme. Right from the very start of the whole project, I wondered what the mood of the Nation would be on that certain day sometime in the future; it was quite hard to discuss and share ideas about tone and style during those early days. It all seemed so remote. I suppose it was

my documentary background that instinctively made me think that this unique occasion demanded more than the straight reportage of 'actuality coverage'. I thought it important to impose an informative element on the event and invest the occasion with a clear recall of what Winston Churchill had stood for and stood against. And I decided that in addition to Brian Connell's commentary, we would use quotations from Churchill's speeches and writings to highlight his character, his beliefs and his achievements, acting as a reminder of what this nation and the world owed to him. And so, on the day, we were able to hear the voice of Sir Laurence Olivier reading short excerpts, which I would interpolate with the appropriate matching live pictures as they unfolded in front of the cameras. For instance, as the sailors pulling the gun carriage progressed round the Aldwych and past St. Clement Danes, the Royal Air Force church, I would cue that particular cameraman for the slow zoom-in on that single file of surviving Battle of Britain pilots, slow-marching behind the coffin, and then cue Brian Connell to introduce this pre-recorded quotation: '*With these men, and with this church dedicated to their gallant comrades, surely this is the moment to remember the great ringing phrase that Winston Churchill spoke in those autumn days of 1940, when they were young and we were all in mortal danger.'*

And we would hear Olivier speak these famous words:

> *"The gratitude of every home in our island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the world war by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."*

I also felt that we should hear Churchill's own voice at his own funeral, to remind ourselves of his stirring rallying calls to the nation during its darkest time. Some of my colleagues thought this a bit risky, a question of taste and all that, but in the event this added hugely to the broadcast, matching its tone and style.

Just over four years into this long period of preparation for the great day, I had some troubling misgivings. Both the BBC and ITV were spending time, resources and, of course, huge budgets on *Operation Hope Not*. We did not choose to be in competition with the BBC, but they, on the other hand, realised that for the first time, their monopoly for covering a major State Occasion was being challenged. For obvious historical reasons, they assumed ownership of these national events and deeply resented this, heightened by the fact that their rival was a commercial network. I remember with some relish, when early in 1960, The Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, called the broadcasting organisations to his first briefing meeting. He had commandeered a grand room in a Government building in Northumberland Avenue, and about fifty people attended, sitting round a massive table. By tradition, The Earl Marshal is the co-coordinator – the ringmaster –- of State Ceremonies, and the Duke of Norfolk was brilliant at this job. He was also blessed with a witty, dry sense of humour. He welcomed us, and looking round this huge gathering said, "Hands up all those from the British Broadcasting Corporation", and a forest of arms shot up. "Hands up all those from Independent Television," and Graham Watts and I raised our arms. "Now there's a surprise," said the Duke. It was a good start.

As time went by, I became aware how seriously the BBC was taking this challenge. They had such a great advantage over us. After all, their producer, Anthony Craxton, working closely with that genius, Richard Dimbleby, had established an unsurpassed track record, and were considered to be world leaders in this field of broadcasting. And here were these upstarts from the commercial world; we were considered to be beyond the pale. And this caused problems. Graham Watts alerted me to difficulties he was having with the Ministry of Works, in getting permission for some of the camera positions we had requested. We realised that the BBC was leaning on some of its old contacts, so that when we came up with a really good camera position that they had not thought of, you could bet that the Ministry would shortly inform us that the BBC had already booked it.

I resented this rivalry. I felt that for this special occasion, British Television should speak with one voice. It was now April 1964, and I put these thoughts to John McMillan. I said to him that I felt so strongly about this that I would volunteer to hand over all my plans, and to see all the cameras, etc. being made available to the BBC. I had already invested four years of planning, but I would, with sadness, give up my role and leave Anthony Craxton to take control. McMillan decided to call a top-level meeting with the BBC, not only to discuss the coverage of the Churchill Funeral, but also to explore future plans for the two organisations to take it in turn to cover national events. The meeting took place in Television House chaired by McMillan. Stuart Hood, the Controller of BBC Television brought Peter Dimmock, Head of Outside Broadcasts, and his assistants, Harry Middleton and Rex Moorfoot, and Anthony Craxton, the producer.

I was asked to present my case, and with mixed feelings I stated that I was prepared to hand over everything and that ITV would simply take the BBC feed for the broadcast. There was a long discussion, but nothing was decided and they went away to report to their hierarchy. Later they replied by letter. The upshot of all this was that they considered the broadcasting of all national events to be the BBC's duty, and, therefore, would never relinquish this responsibility. In other words – goodbye ITV. I had done my bit, felt better for it, and now got on with the job in hand.

Everything was now in place thanks to our bible, the Special District Order. We knew precisely the position, at any given time, of the many elements making up the long procession. All the excerpts to be spoken by Olivier had been chosen, as well as Churchill's own contributions. The camera position had been allocated to the nine ITV companies and everyone knew what their role would be on the day. Even the new Shell Centre was ready and waiting for the broadcast's final moments. We also knew that we had a mere six days from the announcement of Churchill's death, of course, named D-day, to the funeral on D+6. On D+1 the cameras, with their personnel, would have to descend on London and work round the clock to get it all rigged in time.

The only element that I still had to decide on was the choice of opening music, and that led to a very strange experience.

After *Black Marries White,* I had started to research background material for my next documentary – what it was like to be a musician in the London Symphony Orchestra. And it so happened, that on January 15th 1965, I was driving up to Wembley, to its Town Hall, to meet the LSO, where Colin Davis was rehearsing and recording Elgar's Enigma Variations for Phillips. As usual, my car radio was tuned to the BBC Third Programme, and the music it was playing that morning struck me as

being exactly what I had been searching for. It sounded familiar, but I couldn't name it. So I pulled into the kerb, and with pen poised, waited for the usual end announcement: *You have been listening to the symphonic poem 'Also sprach Zarathustra' by Richard Strauss.* What a huge relief – at last I had solved the problem of my opening music. Incidentally, this was two years before Stanley Kubrick famously used it in *Space Odyssey - 2001*. As I continued my drive a new piece of music was now playing, but it came to an abrupt halt, making way for the announcer: *We interrupt this programme for a news flash. It has just been announced that Sir Winston Churchill has suffered a stroke.* Uncanny!

I rapidly made my way to Rediffusion's Wembley Studios less than half a mile away, where I knew the weekly management meeting was in session. I burst into the room, gave them the news, and asked for *Operation Hope Not* to be set into immediate operation. The balloon had now gone up. My sense of relief was mixed with some doubts. Were the plans robust? Was it all going to work? Had we allowed enough time?

The announcement of Churchill's death was expected at any moment, and that would trigger the D-Day starting date. While waiting, we used the time to fine-tune the arrangements. The engineers checked all communications, and the ITV companies started to reschedule their studio commitments so that cameras could be released for shipment to London. An engineer said to me, "I bet the old boy is making sure that he gives us enough time to give him a decent send-off." And all of us began to believe it. In fact, he did hang on for an extra eight days, and died on Sunday, January 24th. The State Funeral would now take place the following Saturday, the 30th. At last, after five long years, we knew the date. And that gave us just five clear days to mount the operation. I am convinced that had it not been for the extra eight days between stroke and death, we would have been dangerously stretched. But because of it, cameras were in position and ready to go on D+4.

Sitting in front of the huge bank of monitors in Television House, five years of planning would now be put to the test. The excitement started as each of the 45 cameras was switched on and the monitors came alive with the most stunning views of London – the way London had never been seen before. It was snowing and quite magical. Especially the bird's eye views from the very top of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Shell Tower took one's breath away.

During this week I asked Sir Laurence Olivier to come to Television House to record the Churchill excerpts. Paul Scofield recorded the prologue, which was written by James Cameron. And Joseph C. Harsch, the great journalist and commentator, recorded his moving American tribute, to coincide with the river procession. All these voices were recorded on audiotape, and I would cue them to be played-in during the live broadcast, at the pre-planned moments of the procession.

Altogether there were 12 outside-broadcast camera units covering the route, each one with its own director, controlling his unit's cameras. I had an 'omnibus talkback button' in front of me, and when I pressed it, all the directors and the 45 cameramen could hear my instructions. We were now able to rehearse, especially the voice-overs. I would decide on the precise shots I was after, work out the pans, zooms and timings, and the point where the tapes had to be cued. The meticulous planning minutiae listed in the much-thumbed District Orders, issued five years before, were about to be tested when on D+5, and in the dark, the procession started its rehearsal at 0445 hours. All the details of timing and distances were spot on. The toughest rehearsals were for the

Bearer Party, traditionally provided by the Grenadier Guards. They had to lift the lead-lined coffin from the Gun Carriage onto their shoulders, all eight hundredweight of it. For their rehearsals it was filled with sand to the exact weight. We all held our breath, especially when they climbed the many steps up to the west door of St. Paul's.

Saturday, January 30th 1965, D+6 had arrived. It was a bitterly cold, windy morning. The 300-strong ITV team were at their posts at 0530 hours to warm up the equipment and test all lines. And at precisely 0830 hours we went on the air. The outside-broadcast of *The State Funeral of Sir Winston Churchill* was to last five hours and five minutes.

Everything went exactly as planned, except for one moment during the broadcast, which took us all by surprise, including the Earl Marshal, who had certainly not planned it as part of that day's ceremonies. London's dockers had secretly decided to man their huge cranes on the south bank of the Thames. And as the launch, Havingore, cast off from Tower Pier bearing Winston Churchill on his last journey, they dipped the big jib arms of their cranes down to the water's edge in salute. I think it was the most moving moment that morning, adding to the high emotion of the day.

My wish for the last shot from the top of the Shell Building was fulfilled. We watched the train, on its journey to Bladen, disappear into the far distance, with the old locomotive bravely belching plumes of white smoke, and Brian Connell finished his sparse commentary with these words:

> *"So Britain's capital and the great world say farewell to Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, Knight of the Garter, Order of Merit and Companion of Honour. Now that great voice is stilled. The incomparable services he rendered his country under six reins for seven decades become part of the history he wrote. Now he will lie in a little leafy Oxfordshire churchyard next to his mother, father, his brother and his family. Not far away there stands in the park of Blenheim Palace, the home of his great ancestor the Duke of Marlborough, the column of victory erected in memory of his great forbear. The inscription at the base rings across nearly 250 years of surely unequalled endeavour by two members of the same family, as true of the one as of the other: "...when exerted the most rescued the Empire from desolation. Asserted and confirmed the Liberties of Europe".*

I then cued the end music; it was from Copeland's *Fanfare to the Common Man*, as Olivier read a final tribute, written in the 17th Century by Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, entitled 'Character of a Valiant Man':

> *'His power is limited by his will; and he holds it the noblest revenge, that he might hurt and doth not. He commands, without tyranny and imperiousness; obeys, without servility: and changes not his mind with his estate. The height of his spirits overlooks all casualities; and his boldness proceeds neither from ignorance nor senselessness: but, first, he values evils and then despises them. He is so balanced with wisdom that he floats steadily in the midst of all tempests. Deliberate in his purposes; firm in resolution; bold in enterprising; unwearied in achieving; and, howsoever, happy in success: and, if ever he be over-come, his heart yields last - The Valiant Man.'*

When we came off the air, I pressed my talkback button to thank everyone - and then the last five hours, indeed the last five years, must have caught up with me. The huge relief of a successful broadcast mixed with the strain, the fatigue and above all, the emotions rendered me literally speechless. Geoffrey Cox, the Editor-in-Chief of ITN News, appeared in the gallery having come down from his office on the top floor of Television House to congratulate me. He shook my hand and I just stood there with my body and face frozen. I could not speak. I was not crying, yet the tears were rolling down my cheeks. It must have been a good ten minutes before I was able to relax. What a day.

The doyen critic Maurice Wiggins, wrote this piece in the *Sunday Times*:

> *As the procession moved away a gun was fired in St. James's Park, the first of 90-minute guns that were to span the lifetime, and the ceremonial of a lifetime. A gun shot that reverberated with the voice of doom. Now it was afoot, at 65 paces to the minute, the slow march of the emperors that measure off the last public moments of the greatest. Now it was permissible, and right, for the camera eyes to leapfrog along the route, and this they did. For no one can bear to march behind the bier save those who must. And here the particular genius of television entered and made us free. Shifts of focus, like a change of rhythm, both rested and enlarged the watcher. And so did the subtle changes of voice and prose when, here and there along the route, at such moments and places that were most apt for it, the commentator paused in his particularity, and other voices took over, the splendid voice of Sir Laurence Olivier and the unforgettable voice of Churchill himself, speaking his own words. These historic echoes made a counterpoint to the commentary which deepened the sense of being present at a culmination of human aspiration and achievement which was already taking on, both here and now, the mysterious dimension of myth and legend. This was the fruit of planning and organisation. This was what is meant by creativeness in television. This it was that helped to turn an "actuality" into a work of art. This was Television's finest hour too.*

The next morning there was a telegram of congratulations from CBC's Fred Friendly from New York:

> *CBS was richer because of what you and your colleagues did today. We were certainly honored to share it with the American people.*

The Networks had set up recording facilities at London Airport, and as the broadcast progressed, they flew the BBC and ITV tapes across the Atlantic for immediate screening. And CBS, after a little while, switched from the BBC's version to ours on ITV.

Looking back on it, I realised that luck had also played its role on that day – good luck as it happened, with some of my colleagues convinced that somehow Churchill had a hand in all this. The state of the tide on the Thames was one instance. A.P Herbert wrote:

> *None of the knowing scribes who wrote so much about Sir Winston Churchill's funeral observed how great a part was played by the tide. He had planned it all*

they say, including the river passage from Tower Pier to Festival Pier, long before. But, unless we like to think that the great genius's ghost was still at work, he could not have planned that, on that destined Saturday, January 30th, it should be high water in King's Reach at 1:00 p.m. with the river full and the floating pontoons almost level with the banks. The Saturday before at that time, it would have been dead low water, and the Saturday after, not far from it. The bows at the piers would have been at an angle impossible even for those gallant Guardsmen carrying the coffin. At a chance encounter with the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl Marshal and brilliant master of the ceremonies, I put the point to him, and he confirmed my humble opinion. "The week before", he said, "we couldn't have done it." Thus even the Thames, even the Moon, we may like to think, conspired together to give grace and good order to that great departure.

Later that same year I was made aware of yet another strange twist to this story. I had been asked to make the television series, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten,* and when I first met him, he asked me to spend a weekend at his home in Broadlands, 'to get to know each other', as he put it. He had asked to see a telerecording of the State Funeral, which I had brought down with me and we watched it in his private cinema. As Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Louis Mountbatten had walked the length of the procession immediately behind the gun carriage. Being an inveterate stickler for detail, he wanted to know all about it, and when I told him that for five long years I could never go anywhere without by pocket transistor radio, just to keep in touch with the state of Churchill's health, he said 'I wish we had met before, because I could have given you the exact day of Winston's death, not the year, but the day.' I had been alerted to Mountbatten's famous boasts, and this was going to be my first encounter of one that had all the makings of a tall story. But I was wrong. He told me, "Some years ago I visited Winston at Chartwell after he had forgiven me over my role as the last Viceroy, when I oversaw the transfer of power in India." He then explained that, as they were walking round his famous walled garden, the topic of conversation centred on death. "Dickie, I know the day I am going to die," Mountbatten recalled, "I am going to die on the same day that my father died." And he did - on January 24th. Was that the reason that made Churchill able to hang on for those extra eight days after his stroke? What a pity that I didn't meet Mountbatten a few years earlier.

After the event, the ITA asked Rediffusion to enter the broadcast for the Grand Prix du C.I.R.A.D. in Cannes, an international competition for outside-broadcast, organised by ORTF, the French State Television Service. One of the rules stipulated that each entry must not run longer than 60 minutes. I spent the next two weeks reducing my OB to one hour; we were not allowed to re-edit, and I found myself deleting huge sections; in fact, I had to throw out just over four hours – a very painful task. I heard from contacts at the BBC, that Craxton was going through the same agony with his programme. His coverage with Richard Dimbleby had also received excellent press reviews, and now the competition between us, which a year before I had tried so hard to avoid, was hotting up again.

Craxton and I were both invited to Cannes to serve on the international jury. There were twenty-four competing programmes from seventeen countries, and the jury was made up of the directors of these programmes. The first day was spent devising procedures, which ensured that we could not vote for our own entries. During the following

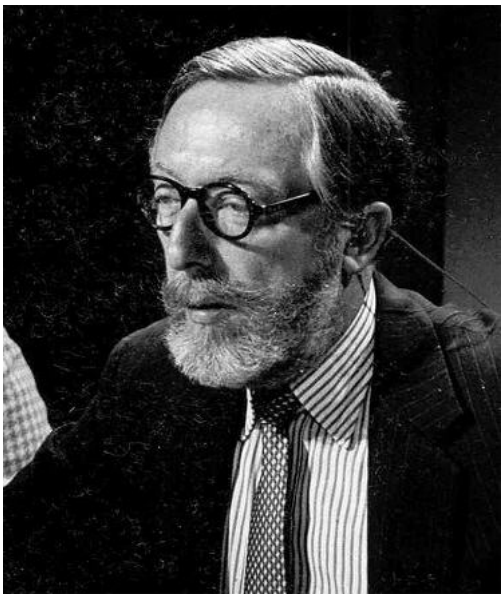
two days we viewed all the programmes, and then came voting day. Victory. ITV won the Grand Prix by a landslide; the BBC's version was not even in the first ten.

This was my first international TV award, and at the celebration luncheon, M. Jacques-Bernard Dupont, Director General of the ORTF, presented me with the Grand Prix. The ITA was represented by Bernard Sendell, its Deputy Director General; also present was a crestfallen Peter Dimmock and his BBC entourage. This occasion marked a real triumph for all the ITV companies and my Rediffusion colleagues, especially Graham Watts my brilliant Assistant Director, who had devoted so much enthusiasm and professionalism to make our broadcast such a success. Personally, I was thrilled with the award. I felt great pride and relief that I had not let Churchill down; I must also own up to feeling some 'Schadenfreude' concerning the BBC, as they had made life so difficult for us 'commercial boys' for five years. And to add to the BBC's disappointment, later that year I was awarded the Guild of Television Producers and Directors' Outside-Broadcast Award – the BAFTA mask.

D+2. Four Days to go. Sir Laurence Olivier pre-recording the Churchill quotations

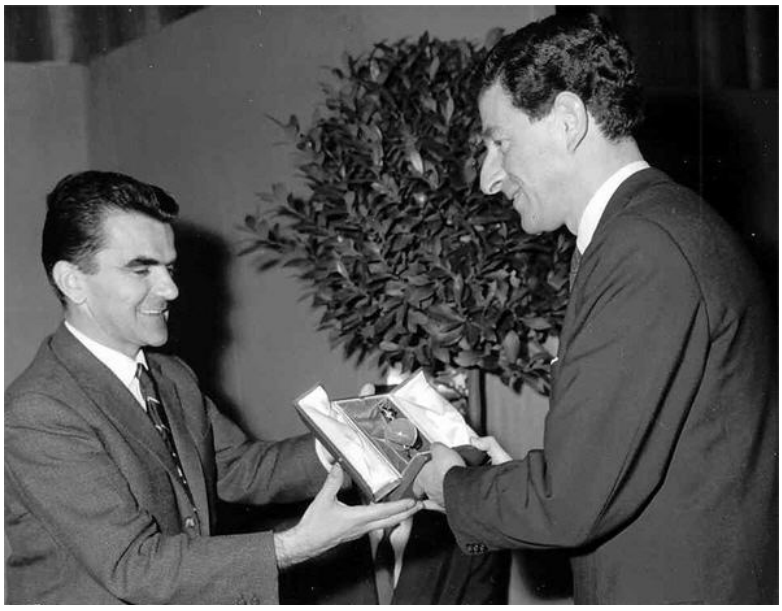
D+5. 4 a.m. rehearsal one day before transmission. Vision Mixer Bridget Booth and Assistant Director Graham Watts

D+6. On the air for five hours with finger on the 'omnibus talkback' button speaking to 45 cameramen



Brian Connell facing his own monitors for his live commentary

The 17- nation Cannes jury
Rival BBC Producer, Anthony Craxton, next to me fourth from left



Jacques-Bernard Dupont, Director General of Radiodiffusion
Television Francaise, presents the Cannes Grand Prix

The 1965 Television Ball at the Dorchester Hotel
Jane, the mask, and Jonathan, due in two months

Chapter 18

In February 1965, I resumed my London Symphony Orchestra research that had been so dramatically interrupted on my way to the orchestra at Wembley Town Hall, when I heard the announcement of Churchill's stroke on the car radio.

The idea for all this emerged the year before, when David (Lord) Windlesham, who was running A-R's Feature Department, asked me to come up with a proposal for a film about the orchestra. I jumped at it.

I knew what was motivating A-R: it was brownie-point time, as ITV franchise renewals were pressing hard. In its increasing philanthropic pursuit of the arts, the A-R Board of Directors had sponsored the LSO and also the Hallé Orchestra, with donations to a 'Grants to Arts and Sciences' scheme, which at that time totalled £59,000 – a large slice of money. Now, with the franchise renewal date coming up fast, the A-R Board felt that this largesse required a higher profile.

This was an exciting time. It reminded me of my early documentary days when I was directing sponsored films; here was a 'client' asking me to make a film, with the simple – and enticing – brief that it should promote the good name of the LSO. What an ideal opportunity to do something different from the predictable orchestral outside-broadcasts, many of which could be seen on both the BBC and ITV. I told David Windlesham that I would have to spend some weeks with the orchestra before I could decide what sort of film I would like to make.

As this was going to be a programme about an orchestra, and knowing very little about the subject, I found myself going to rehearsals, recording sessions and concert performances – above all, I used the time to get to know the musicians really well; to find out what makes them and the LSO tick. It was also important to learn about the continuing logistical, financial and administrative problems faced by the orchestra's management. This was a fact-finding exercise and, as usual, I would only settle on the film's form and style once I had assembled the necessary ingredients. I have come across some of these research notes I made at the time:

A terrible clanging as the bells are lifted over the tailboard …a grating screech as £400 worth of timpani in its heavy crate is slid across the pavement...the clatter of 90 music stands as they pursue the instruments...these are the sounds that are as much part of the orchestra as the music it lives by.

A recording session at Wembley Town Hall in the morning; an orchestral rehearsal at Duke's Hall in the afternoon; a concert in the Royal Festival Hall that evening. Nine hours of music-making, three hours of travelling and, more often than not, for seven days every week. The pre-occupation with their own artistic standard is so intense that the critical moment when overwork and exhaustion must impinge on it is cautiously held off at arm's length – though it can never be far off. These aspects, apart from the sheer joy of the sound the LSO makes when they play, must somehow be included.

I wonder how many who go to concerts, let alone those who don't, think of an orchestra in terms of individuals? Collectively, they are regarded as musicians, hardly

ever as people and never as the workers of this world, and that is what must be highlighted. Should we care that their home lives barely exist? That they get no sick-pay or pension? That they are deeply disturbed by the failure to recruit new orchestral blood of the right standard? To begin to understand their problems, and there are many, the film must reflect this sense of belonging to an orchestra, of being proud to belong, dedicating your whole existence to corporate music-making to the exclusion of almost everything else.

I did not intend this to be a musical film, although we would hear a lot of music. The accent was not on how music is made, but what it feels like to make it – and I called the film, *LSO - The Music Men.*

The LSO suggested that it would suit their hectic schedules to concentrate on two music-making activities for the film: a recording session and a concert. And that is how the Philips session with Colin Davis, conducting Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and the *Cockaigne Overture* at Wembley Town Hall, became the backbone of the film, with the film's climax, an exciting rendering of the last movement of Beethoven's *7th Symphony* at the Festival Hall, conducted by Istvan Kertesz.

Shape and style now emerged, and I decided, once more, to make a film that was largely observational, eschewing the services of an 'outside' narrator.

I then searched for the one player through whose eyes I could tell this story, and he soon emerged – the man who became the point of focus – the individual with a corporate LSO identity. I chose Stuart Knussen, the brilliant principal double bass, because his professionalism was typical of each individual player. He spoke with a rich Mancunian accent that reflected the great variety of accents in this multi-class group – as many as there were instruments. Another reason was that he had a twelve year-old son with great musical talent (Oliver Knussen is today one of our leading composers), and with young Ollie, it was possible to explore the grave shortcomings of musical training in this country – the supply of the next generation of LSO players, which was of great concern. It so happened that the views expressed by the Principal of The Royal Academy of Music, Sir Thomas Armstrong, when I interviewed him, were at the time in conflict with orchestral music makers.

I got to know Stuart Knussen really well, and during many sessions with him, some in pubs, some in his home, I amassed a huge amount of detail that would later provide the narrative for the film. By focusing on this one player, the feeling of satisfaction and pride of belonging to and working with a top orchestra would be firmly established.

I also felt that it was just as important to combine the marvellous noise these men make, with all the little human details that we take for granted in ourselves, but never credit a musician to indulge in. For instance, during the *Enigma Variations* recording session in Wembley Town Hall, Colin Davis picks up the rostrum telephone and checks the balance of the brass with the recording engineer, and during this 60 second conversation the 3rd cello picks up his crossword; the contra bassoon *The Sunday Telegraph;* the trombone his yachting magazine; the 2nd clarinet his new camera fresh from the Japan tour; the 4th horn examines the sandwiches his wife has packed; matches flare; cigarettes are lit; world tour snapshots are passed from desk to desk. Then in a flash they are back playing Elgar again like never before. This facility to relax totally the moment playing stops and to concentrate immediately it starts is essential to the orchestral player's temperament – without it, he would go out of his mind.

I well remember when they were recording *Variation 7,* short, fast and very furious. After the last note, Colin Davis and the orchestra froze for three seconds – a moment of total silence essential to a recording – and then all hell was let loose as they stampeded recklessly out of the hall to be first in the coffee queue. Like a classroom emptying when the end-of-lesson bell rings, and with the same excited babble and laughter, the tension of making music is switched off, and the batteries are recharged. Ten minutes later they were back at their desks – professional music-makers again. Colin Davis is back on the rostrum, a retake on *Variation 7* is called for – a jet flying overhead spoilt the last one. He puts his hand into his lightweight conductor's jacket, pulls out a crumpled piece of paper and announces, "Good God, I've found a cheque for £34!" The orchestra bursts into laughter – five seconds later the red light goes on and they are off again.

Next day, sandwiched in between two sessions, there is a shareholders' meeting. Each member of the LSO is obliged to take on this extraordinary role – a personal stake in the artistic and financial affairs of this non-profit making company (even if there was a profit to make). It's an all-male enterprise; the only time a female musician can be seen behind a music stand is when the score demands a harpist. Today, of course, the gender mix is not an issue. There is a board of directors, all players, elected by the members, with their outstanding principal horn, Barry Tuckwell, as chairman. They meet to make a historic decision: to appoint a new principal conductor to fill the vacuum left by the late and dearly loved Pierre Monteux. Jealous of their independence, they decide that cameras are not to be allowed to record this meeting. Arriving for the meeting, yes; Barry Tuckwell calling the meeting to order, yes; and then the doors are bolted with the outsiders where they belong – outside.

After the vote, my crew and I joined Barry Tuckwell and Ernest Fleichmann, the LSO's dynamic general secretary, in a mad dash to Cologne to confront the orchestra's new choice, Istvan Kertesz.

No, he did not realise that the orchestra retained full artistic and financial control. "Exactly how much power will I have as principal conductor?" he asks, as the cameras record the making of the principal conductor. This much-admired musician performed this function very successfully for three years. Tragically, in 1973, at a young age, he died in a swimming accident.

And so to a milestone in the history of the LSO: the Memorial Concert which was to mark Monteux's retirement on his 90th birthday, and Kertesz's first appearance since his new appointment. In contrast to the shirtsleeves, hacking jackets and jeans of the Wembley sessions, out come the platform uniforms. The only outward signs now that reflects the players' individuality are the 90 different ways of knotting a white tie. There is the last drag on yet another cigarette before the march on to the platform. A packed house is eagerly anticipating Beethoven's *7th Symphony.*

And when, after the last note has been played, the rapturous applause dies down, and the orchestra's fans pour backstage, the LSO breaks up to snatch a night's sleep. At 10 a.m. next morning, back to Elgar, the glamour of the concert is forgotten, replaced by the discipline of yet another recording session. It's tough work being an orchestral player, but it is this dedication that I wanted to capture.

It was only after all the filming had been completed and David Hodgson, the film editor, and I had assembled the first rough-cut, that I started to concentrate on the spoken word. Armed with an audio tape recorder, I spent many hours prompting Stuart Knussen to tell

me, in his own words, what I had learnt from him over the past weeks. Now it had to be disciplined so that after careful editing it would become the 'information' soundtrack for the film. The technique of eliciting statements from people, as opposed to recording answers to a series of questions, was by now being used by a handful of documentary makers. I first used it in the l950s with *Fan Fever* and *Members' Mail.* At the time I did not realise that it would evolve into such a useful style.

I then set about recording the other voices: Colin Davis, the young Oliver Knussen, Barry Tuckwell, and Danny Liddington, the driver in charge of the orchestra's instruments.

I used three (16mm) cameras to film the orchestra for the Philips' session and the concert at the Festival Hall. For the latter, I was keen to put cameras right amongst the players to capture intimate close-ups of the musicians 'at work' – impossible, of course, during a public performance. I, therefore, asked Istvan Kertesz and the orchestra to put on their white ties and tails for their final rehearsal. And we filmed it in such a way that the empty auditorium was never in shot. This material was then intercut with the footage of that evening's performance with the Festival Hall full to bursting point. Stuart Knussen's ecstatic facial expressions as he sawed away on his double bass stole the show. And with shots of the audience applauding this masterly performance, we hear Stuart's final thought: "This is what makes our life worth living."

LSO – The Music Men was transmitted in peak time on 22nd September 1965. These are excerpts from some of the press cuttings:

The Sun - Nancy Banks Smith

REDIFFUSION last night gave us 'The smashing Sandie Shaw' and 'LSO-The Music 'Men'. Music pop-pop. Music top drawer. Still music. Maybe they had no moral in mind. Maybe there is none. Sandie shown like this, cold, without an audience, was like a conductor without an orchestra. She's hardly a singer, more a symbol; those bare toes and that voice in her nose. But the point about popsters is – isn't it? – that they conduct their audience. Give Sandie a room full of kids and with a movement, a sidelong look, she'll bring the audience thundering in, as the London Symphony Orchestra responded to Colin Davis's baton. I don't suppose Davis would care for the comparison. He explained what it's like to be part of an orchestra with all the flash and fluency of, surely, a Welshman. Almost everything he said about making music en masse is worth repeating. "This extraordinarily exciting noise, like living one hundred times faster. You cease to be just yourself. You become a part of something that is happening. A corporate attempt to produce something marvellous." It was extraordinary to see. This shirtsleeved sweat shop in Wembley Town Hall, which is the LSO in rehearsal. That craggy man with the fag glued to his lower lip – the principal double bass player. Somehow you felt there should have been something to distinguish conductors from bus conductors, musicians from just men. Nothing. Seventy-five men. One on the rostrum – and suddenly they explode. Like athletes off the starting block. Or a cavalry charge or an aircraft taking off, propellers turning, pistons pumping. Like seeing 75 men go magnificently, mutually mad. Or all falling in love together or all getting religion at the same moment. But, of course, it is a kind of love and a sort of religion. Sandie raises her eyes, and the kids scream. Davis his arms and 75 instruments scream in tune. And both for joy.

The Times:
Peter Morley succeeded by judicious cutting and clever camera work in presenting the ethos of an orchestra through the personalities of its individual members and its conductors. Here was a programme about people rather than about music, but one might add a rider and say that it was about why certain people must make music and must make music practically to the exclusion of all other interests. The shapelessness of this documentary derived from the happy fact that the director had not tried to impose a form on what is in reality a sprawling activity. There is nothing more desultory than an orchestral rehearsal; the wonder is that the end product, record or concert, should often be so thrilling. Just why was revealed in the study of the rapport between one conductor, Colin Davis, and his players – an unspoken relationship of primus inter pares.

Birmingham Post – Lynda Dyson
When ITV is prepared to devote an hour to a film about the London Symphony Orchestra there is no doubt that televised music has arrived. And to my mind a documentary like this one is worth ten recordings of the Proms. It is a credit to Peter Morley's direction that the anonymous white ties of the symphony orchestra came alive during this film and left me determined to attend a concert by the LSO at the first opportunity.

Hastings Evening Argus:
There are times, when a TV piece on classical music falls right on its feet, when the action adds to an appreciation of the music. Last night was another such occasion when Rediffusion sacrificed (for them) an hour of precious programme time to a documentary on the London Symphony Orchestra. "The Music Men" was a very large peep into the lives of the men who made music professionally, and to do this cameras never attempted to create nor to interpret, but recorded faithfully without ever getting in the way. Peter Morley's film will do more for the cause of classical music on TV than any last night at the Proms.

A journalist from the weekly *Television Mail* (alas, there is no by-line on the cutting) took this opportunity to interview me for a lengthy piece, looking back on my first ten tears in TV:

...I didn't ask him – though I admit it was on the tip of my tongue – what sort of viewer he had in mind for 'LSO - The Music Men', when Morley got in first saying that when he first started working for Rediffusion ten years ago, that fact was a constant pre-occupation. It took him two years, he said, to rid himself of an absolute fallacy, which causes a producer to categorise viewers. There is no such person, he said, as an average viewer, anymore than there is a man in the street. These are myths. His programme standard, he said, is his own. He makes it, so to speak, for himself and hopes that there are enough viewers who get out of it what he put into it. If a programme is well made then viewers will watch – almost irrespective of the subject.

Peter Morley's ten years in Television House are distinguished years by any standards. Soon after he joined Associated-Rediffusion, first in the ITV field, he

produced Benjamin Britten's 'The Turn of the Screw' the only full-length opera on ITV. His list is like a telephone directory page. But for all his successes, a professional's career is still precarious. Like an actor, he is still only as good as his last programme. But it keeps him (like them) ever alert. And as well as a number of awards like the Grand Prix for the Churchill funeral he also got himself Jane, a senior production assistant, who has been Mrs Morley for coming up to four years. So there is a lot to be said for Independent Television in the Morley home.

I couldn't help but agree.

LSO - The Music Men 1965

Colin Davis

Istvan Kertesz

The London Symphony Orchestra as seen through the eyes of its Principal Double Bass, Stuart Knussen. At home he makes music with his twelve-year-old son, the budding composer, Oliver

Chapter 19

Admiral-of-the-Fleet, The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, was due to retire from active service in the summer of 1965. Early in World War II he had been a dashing (some say reckless) Destroyer Flotilla Commander, with his beloved HMS Kelly being sunk by German Stuka bombers in the battle of Crete; he was the first Chief of Combined Operations; defeated and cleared the Japanese out of Burma as Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia; as the Last Viceroy of India, masterminded the controversial Transfer of Power, splitting the sub-continent into India and the new Pakistan; returned to the Navy, rose to First Sea Lord; ended his career as Chief of Defence Staff. He was murdered by the IRA in 1979.

In 1922, he married the immensely rich heiress, Edwina Ashley, granddaughter of Sir Ernest Cassels. They had two daughters, the eldest, Patricia, had married the film Producer, John Brabourne, the 7th Baron Brabourne of Brabourne. Her younger sister, Pamela, had married the designer, David Hicks.

John Brabourne was on the Council of the British Film Academy when we first met during the early Academy merger talks with the Guild of Television Producers and Directors. As a result, since 1958, we had been fellow council members of the newly formed Society of Film and Television Arts. In 1975, it was renamed the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), and we were appointed fellow Foundation Trustees. And that is how I became involved with the Mountbatten family.

In 1964, he had persuaded his father-in-law – known as Dickie to his large family – to tell the story of his life and times on television, knowing that Mountbatten was unwilling to authorise an official biography while he was alive, let alone write his autobiography. John B put up this Mountbatten TV series idea to the BBC. A dinner for Mountbatten was hosted by Hugh Carlton Greene, the incumbent BBC Director-General, and a very sumptuous affair it turned out to be. Mountbatten was wined and dined and flattered, and by the time the brandy and port was passed round, agreement was reached for the BBC to make a television series. It was understood that Mountbatten could only get involved after his official retirement the following year.

I was totally unaware of all this, when in the spring of 1965, John McMillan once more called me to his office and told me that he had been approached by the Mountbatten family, offering Rediffusion the opportunity to make a series about Mountbatten's life and times, with the proviso that I would be made available to produce and direct it. "Was I interested?" he asked. I confessed that I knew very little about Mountbatten, but that it sounded like an intriguing idea.

I then had a meeting with John Brabourne and the first thing I asked him was why this project had been offered to Rediffusion and not the BBC. And I was now told a bizarre story. He had written to the BBC shortly after Mountbatten's retirement, to make them aware that he was now ready to embark on the TV series. He had to wait quite some time for a reply, and when it came, it simply stated that the BBC had decided not to go ahead with this project. Apparently no details were given and I believe that to this day no one ever discovered what brought about this volte-face on behalf of the Corporation.

And that is how I came onto the scene. Little did I realise that with all the predictable ups and downs of film-making, this assignment was to last three extraordinary years. And in recalling it all now, forty years on, I must give due warning that, because of the nature of this project, I will not be able to avoid some fairly outrageous name-dropping.

Early in September 1965, John Brabourne arranged my first meeting with Lord Mountbatten – a lunch at the splendid Knightsbridge headquarters of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, of which he was, at the time, Commodore. I was unsure of how to prepare myself for this day – there was little time to bone up on Mountbatten's unique career – so I thought I might as well parade my ignorance, as that would be less of a risk than pretending otherwise. I arrived with John B and as we approached the bar, Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma came over, we shook hands, and he said: "Do you know what a horse's neck is?" I shook my head. "It's a navy drink, brandy and ginger ale with ice, and as we are going to work together, you might like to get used to it. By the way, I am going to call you Peter." "And what shall I call you, sir?" I asked. "I will answer to anything you like, but I would prefer Lord Louis."

That was a typical example of his 'ice-breaking' technique. Lord Mountbatten (I will refer to him as LM from now on) had this knack of making every one he met, regardless of rank or stature, feel immediately at ease. I was able to observe this at first hand many times for the next three years. Over lunch, he checked out some of the information that John B had told him about me. He was particularly interested in my army service, and the sort of programmes I enjoyed making. "What makes you want to tell the story of my life, and how are you going to do it?" "Lord Louis, I'm afraid I am hopelessly ignorant about your life, and at this point I must keep an open mind on how to proceed". I soon realised that I had learnt my first and essential lesson that was to stand me in good stead: with LM you tell it 'as it is'; you don't flannel or bullshit, you make sure of your facts, and you must always be able to justify your reasons and decisions. "Right," he said, "you'd better come down to Broadlands for a weekend so that we can get to know each other. I will get John Barratt, my secretary, to arrange it."

Broadlands is a splendid Georgian Palladian mansion, just outside Romsey in Hampshire. I was to get to know it well. The House, with its magnificent grounds overlooking the River Test, dates back to 1780, when the owner, Henry Temple, 2nd Viscount Palmerston, engaged Capability Brown and Henry Holland to transform it from its earlier existence as a Tudor and Jacobean manor house. It was the home of Lord Palmerston (the 3rd Viscount) who became Prime Minister in 1855, and it came into the Mountbatten family when Edwina (Lady M) inherited Broadlands just before World War II.

On 27th September 1965, I drove up to the estate's elaborate wrought-iron main gates, displaying the Mountbatten monogram: the lodge keeper was expecting me and had opened them up and waved me through. Along the drive through the park, leading up to the main house, I spotted LM galloping towards me. He pulled up his horse, waved me down and told me where to park. "Charles will look after your luggage. I'll be with you shortly and show you to your room." Charles, the butler, who had clocked up many years of service with the Mountbattens, was waiting for me outside the east portico. He took my case, and Evans, one of the stewards, drove my car away, to park it near the stables. This was a different world and there was a lot for me to take in.

LM appeared, still in his jodhpurs and polo shirt, and gave me a quick conducted tour on the way to my room. There were two grand, sweeping staircases meeting on the

landing of the first floor, the one on the left displaying large and small canvasses of his ancestors, and the other one, equally impressive, Edwina's ancestors. "We have put you in the Portico Room, I think you will find this quite comfortable." Needless to say, it was a magnificent room, the windows overlooking the vast lawn sloping down to the river Test, and a huge four-poster bed, with two steps down to a sumptuous bathroom. "Do you see anything special in the wallpaper?" he asked, so I looked hard at the very attractive pattern of climbing roses, and then the penny dropped – the outlines of the stems and petals traced the profiles of Victoria and Albert looking at each other. He congratulated me, as most of his guests had to have it explained to them. I felt that I had scored a minor triumph. "By the way," he said "this settee belonged to my Great Grandmother, Queen Victoria," and he picked up a cushion and gave it to me to hold, "and this was placed on her lap when she held me for my christening." He then said that he would go and change, and come back to take me downstairs for a drink before luncheon was served. And there were more surprises to come.

Charles appeared from nowhere with my case and started to unpack it. He took my toilet bag into the bathroom and hung up my dinner jacket in a huge wardrobe, and placed shirts, socks and pants neatly into a chest of drawers, the like of which I had only ever seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. "Sir, if I may be permitted to say so, you must be highly regarded by his Lordship to be put up in this room." I asked him about the room's significance, and he said: "Did his lordship not tell you, sir, that this is the room Her Majesty stays in when she comes down for her annual weekend at Broadlands?" This was a typical example of the Mountbatten style, and I felt that I could now claim that I have slept in the Queen's bed and sat on her throne. The fact that the Queen and Prince Philip spent their honeymoon here was just one of the many fascinating details that came thick and fast and, somehow, had to be absorbed.

Past the array of paintings of his forbears, with their eyes following our every step down the staircase, LM turned this into my first genealogical tour that weekend – a swift history lesson going back all the way to Charlemagne, peppered with anecdotes that I tried hard to remember.

Then through the Wedgwood room into the drawing room, stopping off at the grog-tray. It was not difficult to get to like a pre-lunch horse's neck, and armed with it, I was shown intriguing memorabilia, priceless furniture, and an eclectic collection of paintings ranging from a brilliant de La Tour to Canaletto and a de Laszlo's portrait of Edwina Mountbatten.

The dining room where Charles was waiting to serve luncheon, is famous for its gigantic Van Dycks. And although I was somewhat overwhelmed, I did enjoy it all, including the simplicity and excellence of the food.

Coffee was served in the drawing room, and LM announced that he would forgo his constitutional nap and show me the grounds and park. And as we strolled through Capability Brown's handiwork, the questions came thick and fast:

"How do you begin to try and discipline the story of my life and tell it in a set of television programmes? Where do you start?"

"Lord Louis, this is the start," I replied. "Until I know your story, I must simply keep an open mind. The first task for me is to find and engage an historian/writer, and only then, together with him, can I begin to come up with a plan. At the moment I am sure that in order to tell the story of your life, we must explore the times you lived through,

and it will be a major task to get the correct balance. So there's a lot of research to be organised."

"But what do you expect me to do on the screen? Are you going to interview me? Or am I just going to be the narrator?"

"I must keep an open mind about that too. I know you will agree that the primary task is to establish first of all what it is one wants to achieve, and only then to decide the best way of achieving it. As always, it has got to be contents before technique."

And so it went on, and the more we talked, the easier he made it for me to converse with him. By teatime, as we got back to the house, I felt that we had established an atmosphere of candour that was going to prove to be of immense value for the future. Over tea, he described his way of coming to decisions, a style, and a technique that he used right through his career. He called it 'the spirit of the hive': "I like listening to the buzz of lots of bees inside a hive, freely airing their opinions, making frank contributions to the topic in hand, and then allowing me to make up my mind. I hope you realise that this is the first time since my retirement that someone else is in charge – and I wish you well." Of course, I knew that to mean: 'You had better bloody well not let me down'.

Soon it was time to change for dinner. I went upstairs to the Portico Room to find my dinner jacket spread out on the bed, with the fresh dress shirt carefully unfolded with its buttons undone and the cufflinks in position. The folded handkerchief, black socks and shoes were also on parade. The last time I had seen such symmetry was in the army, when we had our weekly kit inspection. Charles knocked on the door, came in and asked whether he could draw my bath. I really felt I had arrived. "His Lordship has asked me to tell you that when you are ready, and care to come down to the drawing room, you are to help yourself to the grog-tray and that he will join you there." I thought that I could get used to this. "Will you take tea in the morning, sir? May I suggest seven-forty-five? I will bring the tray to you with the morning papers." This turned out to be a clutch of all the morning papers, with the Daily Mirror on top; according to Charles, that was a Royal Family tradition.

After dinner, back in the drawing room over coffee, brandy and cigars, I listened to an avalanche of fascinating anecdotes, and soon came to the conclusion that, as ever, the question of what to include and what to leave out in the telling of LM's life and times in a television series, was going to be horrendous problem. LM's "You must include this story, whatever we do…" became a familiar mantra over the next three years.

At one point, looking at his watch, he walked over to his desk, picked up the telephone: "I must just make a quick call to Windsor." He spoke to the Queen almost daily, and I soon became aware of their very close relationship. I remember him saying: "Lillibet, I've got the producer, Peter Morley, staying here at Broadlands. We're discussing my television series," He kept her abreast of all his activities, and when we started the filming for the series, no matter where we were in the world, he would write to her, almost on a daily basis.

Breakfast the next morning was yet another agreeable experience. The sideboard groaned with an array of Mountbatten silverware dishes, and on lifting the heavy domed covers, the full gamut of English breakfast fare was on display.

LM told me that he had invited Ronnie Brockman over for luncheon, as he thought it would be very helpful for me to meet him as he had worked closely with LM for the past twenty years. I then learnt that Vice-Admiral Sir Ronald Brockman had been the

Secretary to the Viceroy, and was associated with LM's subsequent appointments right up to his retirement.

After lunch, LM said that he had some work to do and suggested that Admiral Brockman and I might go out and explore the grounds. The drift of our conversation, as we walked along the Test, with the salmon rising, soon changed from viceregal anecdotes to my role in this enterprise. I realised that the purpose of his visit to Broadlands was to vet me, and he did this in a searching and most pleasant manner. Looking back on it now, I am sure I must have been vetted by a number of people, but I was unaware of it. After all, I did have access to the Mountbatten archive, and he had only recently retired from being Chief of Defence Staff, quite apart from the fact that he had a reputation of being delightfully indiscreet.

Back to London, and a great deal to ponder over. LM's first question, 'where do you start', was now a reality. On that Monday morning I rang a few friends and colleagues, some at the BBC, to help me compile a short list of potential writers. I had watched with admiration the recent BBC series The *Great War*, and I was not surprised when the name of John Terraine, one of its writer/producers came top on my list. I phoned him and suggested that we might have lunch. He lived in Notting Hill and we made a rendezvous at his favourite watering hole, the Uxbridge Arms, an establishment that was to become a regular venue for us for the years to come. The Ark, a small and rather quaint restaurant nearby, became our constitutional eating establishment, and that is where many a plot was hatched.

We immediately hit it off. John was a highly regarded and very successful military historian, with a prolific output of publications covering both world wars. He had a dry and wicked sense of humour that I found very appealing. His involvement with the BBC and *The Great War* series had given him a taste for archive film and its exploitation for good visual storytelling; when I said that we would combine that with a great deal of original filming with Mountbatten, he did not need much persuasion to come and join me. And so began, what was to become, a unique bit of programme making. Our pairing for this venture combined the erudition and the intellectual and analytical approach of an historian, with my capacity to 'think with my stomach', as I have always liked to describe it. It balanced our strengths and weaknesses and it worked extremely well. A case of mutual respect and mutual liking – and as a bonus, we never fell out. What luck.

I phoned LM and asked whether I could bring John Terraine down to Broadlands so that they could meet, and that is what happened. I noticed that LM was much impressed by John's immense knowledge and his fresh approach to the interpretation of history to a large television audience. That was a good start. John and I relished the stream of unstoppable stories we were exposed to, and I suggested that in order to get the whole enterprise off the ground, we should spend a considerable number of days at Broadlands with a sound recordist, to capture not only the story of LM's life, but also the style of his language. I proposed that the three of us would come armed with an inventory of topics and questions, and would go on recording until we had nothing left to say. LM jumped at this notion. A month later this was achieved, and when these recordings were transcribed – producing hundreds of pages – they became the foundation document enabling John Terraine to begin to map out the first outline treatment for thirteen programmes.

It was the convention in the sixties, established by the American networks, that television series ran for 13 weeks, and Rediffusion reckoned on 13 half-hour programmes for the Mountbatten series – and with minus the time allowed for commercials, it left a mere 26 minutes per episode to grab viewers' attention, and to develop the story. The lessons I had learnt from the clutch of one-hour documentaries I had made over the last ten years, was that a programme length of only 30 minutes, apart from limiting the amount of information that can be communicated, comes across as being rather light-weight, and somehow 'not as serious a programme' as a sixty-minuter.

And now, faced with that mountain of transcripts, it was obvious that even if they were to be one-hour programmes, we were going to be very pushed to squeeze the past sixty-five years of LM's life and the times he lived through into thirteen episodes. I kept quiet about this; there were political and budgetary implications that it would have been unwise to raise at this point. I was certain that further down the line, when we had reached the stage of assembling one episode on film, the one-hour concept would speak for itself, and the powers-that-be would not be able to argue against it.

* * * *

We set to work. It didn't take long for John to come up with a chronology, breaking down the twin threads of the series – the life and the times – into, what three years later, ended up as twelve hour-long episodes. We were now able to plan the contents of each one and decide on the locations for filming, and also begin to organise the research for archive film. We also had to decide the most effective way for LM to make his on-screen contributions. There were three options. To put his 'to camera' pieces onto a teleprompting device ruled itself out because, at the time, the Autocue equipment was heavy and cumbersome, and the thought of carting it round the world to difficult locations like a Burmese jungle, was simply not on. In any case, the cost of an operator and freight charges would have been prohibitive.

The second option was to film short and carefully prepared location interviews, but that ruled itself out because LM's style of speaking, verbose to say the least, would have required a series of at least twenty-six episodes!

So the answer was for John to write LM's contributions, and then for him to learn them off by heart and speak them directly into the camera. That's where our Broadlands recordings were so valuable, because John could compose these pieces based on LM's own language, and he would feel at home uttering his own, albeit highly condensed version of events. Although I felt that this was a risky solution, not knowing how easy it would come to our star to learn his words, or how he would 'perform' them, there was really no alternative. It certainly was to give us some headaches later on.

At this stage, I gave John McMillan a progress report, and spelled out the various recce and shooting trips that we were likely to undertake; also that the royalty costs of archive film were still unknown. And as far as I could tell, I would need a three-year production period, engage two researchers immediately, and require one cutting room allocated to me now, with another two in about eighteen months time. He did not demur, and I then asked him about the budget, and for the second time in five years I heard these halcyon words from him: "Let that be my worry – just go ahead." (The first time it was for

The Turn of the Screw – what a man.) It was still too early to mention my belief that we would end up with one-hour programmes.

John and I visited Broadlands quite frequently, discussing scripts, eliciting yet more details, and generally keeping LM 'on side'. He was an absolute stickler for detail, always probing to find out exactly how we were going to handle it. We were quite glad not to be serving under him! But there was no doubt that both of us enjoyed these sessions very much – each time, we learnt more about him. He insisted that we should get to know him, warts and all. And we did. He willingly confessed to being a show-off; loved being flattered; enjoyed dressing up in his many different uniforms; intolerant of those who hid their weaknesses; impatient with his personal staff. "Good leadership," he explained, "was a mixture of arrogance, ruthlessness and vanity, while retaining one's sense of humour."

What soon became apparent to us was his rather disarming way in laying claim to the ownership of all ideas, strategies, and inventions. He soon realised that we were well aware of this trait, and had a good laugh when I told him that John and I wanted to call the series 'The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten' and congratulated him on thinking up such a brilliant title.

Coming, so to speak, under his spell, we realised the danger of creating a hagiography. We had to keep that in mind and make sure to find the right balance between the facts and LM's charming and persuasive 'the great I am' syndrome. Not easy.

Like all members of the Royal family, he was a great movie fan, and the Broadlands 'period' cinema was luxurious, to say the least. It boasted a fine fireplace with a magnificent Grinling Gibbons carved woodwork chimneypiece of fruit, flowers, small animals and cherubs' heads. On one of my very early visits to Broadlands, I screened my Cannes Grand Prix one-hour version of the Churchill Funeral – LM was, after all, the principal pallbearer, walking immediately behind the gun carriage. That was when he told me the story of Churchill confiding in him the date of his death.

It was also on this occasion that I learnt about his film collection. He was the founder of the Royal Navy Film Corporation, and introduced projection equipment and films to the fleet in the 1920s. He told me that hundreds of cans of 35mm film were stored in the basement. Over the years he had been presented with or had 'acquired' this collection. "You should really spend some time going through them as you may wish to use some of the material in the series." I listened to this with horror. I feared that most of this was bound to be on nitrate film – highly volatile with age – presenting a real danger to Broadlands. Nitrate film has been known to combust spontaneously, causing the most fearsome explosions and fires. Both my early-war projection days at the Dominion and my close connection with the British Film Institute had taught me that.

He took me down to the basement and when we entered this storeroom, the familiar pervading acrid smell of nitrate film hit me. There were piles of rusty film cans, all manner of titles, although the labels on most of them were difficult to decipher. I picked up a can with the title *Nice and Friendly*. "Good God, I knew this would be down here somewhere. You must use it in the series." Indeed we did. It was a one-reeler directed by and with Charlie Chaplin, starring Lord and Lady Mountbatten and the child actor, Jackie Coogan. Chaplin made it in 1922 as a wedding present to the Mountbattens when

they visited Hollywood on their honeymoon. The Mountbatten acting was pretty awful, which adds to the charm of it, and it also shows rare footage of Chaplin as himself.

Decisive action had to be taken. I knew that the Henderson Laboratory in North London specialised in 'rescuing' nitrate film by transferring it onto 'safety stock'. LM agreed immediately for me to organise the removal of his highly dangerous archive, and the next day Hendersons collected all the cans using special trucks for this purpose. What a relief.

John Rowe, a Rediffusion film researcher, armed with detailed briefings from John Terraine and me, now started to scour the world's archives for the series. I knew London's Imperial War Museum's archive pretty well, having used footage from it on several of my productions, and we were bound to use a fair amount of it for the Mountbatten series. I went to see Dr. Noble Frankland, the museum's director, to try and do some sort of deal with him regarding royalty fees, for an unspecified amount of footage. He suggested that if the Museum were to be presented with a 35mm colour print of the whole series on completion, he would waive all payments. This was too good to be true, and I happily agreed. He then said that he would make one further condition: that I would use my best endeavours to persuade Lord Mountbatten to attend the première of the series to be staged in the Museum's cinema. That evening I rang up LM and explained it all to him and his immediate reply was: "Of course, I will be there, but tell Frankland that I will not be alone, as I will have the Queen and the whole Royal Family with me – what I call the Royal Flush." Three years later that is exactly what happened.

By the beginning of 1966, John had made rapid progress with the outlines for each episode – we fine-tuned these at frequent sessions in the Uxbridge Arms and the Ark. Because we were creating a novel mixture of history, biography and autobiography, it seemed logical to start with the birth of LM in 1900 and follow through chronologically with the rest of the programmes. We told LM that we were both very grateful to him for having been born in 1900; it eased the mathematics when working out his age during any given year in this hectic twentieth century.

We had now decided the contents of each episode, and soon the locations we wanted to take LM back to, produced a formidable list of far-flung countries: Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore, Bangkok, India, and Malta. Of course, there would be many locations in the UK: apart from Broadlands, we wanted to shoot at 10 Downing Street, Christ's College Cambridge, Buckingham Palace, Greenwich College, the Admiralty, the underground Cabinet War Rooms, Ministry of Defence, and many more. And as the outlines developed, an impressive list of eyewitnesses had to be approached and their willingness to participate had to be sought.

At the start of 1966, there were additional events occupying my mind. Jane was highly pregnant, having resigned her drama P.A. position at Rediffusion the previous autumn, to prepare for this great event. And unexpectedly, I was asked by John Macmillan to produce a special live programme to be networked on February 8th. It was called *Pay and Prices - the CRUNCH,* and it was all about the Harold Wilson government's deep economic crisis. George Brown, his colourful bon viveur Chancellor of the Exchequer, was trying to combat runaway wages and prices. I was asked to be the show's producer, with an editorial team made up by Alastair Burnet, George Ffitch, Geoffrey Hodgson,

George Scott and Andrew Shonfield. A formidable cast had been assembled for the studio: Rt. Hon. George Brown, M.P.; Rt. Hon. Reginald Maudling, M.P.; Rt. Hon. Jo Grimond, M.P.; Rt. Hon. Aubrey Jones; John Davies; Desmond Donnelly, M.P.; Clive Jenkins; Thomas Kilpatrick; William Rees-Mogg; Lord Sainsbury; George Woodcock.

At the time, these were the leading players representing politics, economics and the trade unions, and I clearly recall the tense atmosphere in the Green Room as they arrived for transmission. We had to lay on a separate room for George Brown, with the request by his minders only to have soft drinks on parade.

The network had agreed to Rediffusion's unique request to allow the programme, once on the air, to run its natural length, regardless of the published programme schedule that followed it. This was to be ITV's first 'open ended' programme, and that took many by surprise.

I had a surprise of a different kind. I came up from Broadlands early in the morning of transmission day and went straight to the studio, only to be told that a friend had taken Jane to the maternity unit of University College Hospital. As luck would have it, early that evening, I was able to call a break in my studio rehearsals and dashed up to the hospital and was present at the birth of our son, Jonathan. Jane and the baby were both in very good form, but it was with mixed feelings that I had to leave them and tear back again to continue the rehearsals for the next evening's show. The programme came off well, but the London *Evening News* blamed me for what they thought was a mistake in the programme's timing:

> *WHY MR. MORLEY LET THE TV SHOW RUN*
> *I talked to-day to ITV producer Peter Morley, the man who annoyed some viewers last night by allowing a live programme, "Pay And Prices - The Crunch" to over-run by 33 minutes. Mr. Morley was a tired man to-day – for personal as well as programme reasons. His wife had had their first child a week early. So Mr. Morley had to divide his time planning the programme and visiting his wife and day-old son. It meant that a James Bond hour, which followed, started at 10.58 instead of around 10.25 p.m. as expected. "My instructions" said Morley, "were to let it run as long as the subject justified it. When I thought all that could usefully be said had been said, then I could wind up." He did not even know a Bond programme was next on the screen.*

This cutting earned pride of place in Jonathan's first baby-photograph scrap book.

I received a very nice letter from LM congratulating us on Jonathan's arrival – and soon it was back to the coalface, concentrating on the series. John Barratt, LM's secretary, was doing some great staff-work on behalf of the project, writing dozens of letters dictated by his master, to LM's contacts in the countries we wanted to film in. And by contacts I mean the Kings, Presidents, Prime Ministers and Dictators who were asked to smooth the way for our visits. And I took the opportunity to declare him the best-connected Unit Manager in the business. He enjoyed that.

Filming started in the spring of 1966, and we finally put the cameras away in October 1968 – an exhausting, eventful, sometimes turbulent, but always highly enjoyable three years. John would write the 'Mountbatten to camera' pieces, based on the hours of recording we had in our larder, and when LM read them for the first time, he usually said: "I didn't know that I could be so succinct." Learning them off by heart was a

different matter. It is not easy when you have never had to do it before, but he was such a perfectionist that he never minded how many takes were required – if I remember correctly, our record was fourteen in the middle of a Burmese jungle with leeches crawling up our legs. But just as taxing as being word perfect was the actual delivery – with the right stresses on the words, and at the same time having a relaxed demeanour. He never took naturally to that, and we had to rehearse each piece many times over, with Jonathan Avery, our Unit Manager, acting as prompt.

In between our shooting dates in the UK in 1966, I went on recce trips to all our foreign locations with Vicky Miller, my P.A., not merely to finalise the details of where and how I would shoot this mass of material, but also to organise the many social events LM would wish to attend. Huge demands on his time (and ours) were going to be made in each of the countries – everyone who had met him in his previous incarnation wanted a piece of him, and I found myself having to decline, on his behalf, a number of requests, even some State Banquets and ceremonial parades in his honour.

Also, I had to make final filming arrangements with the many eyewitnesses I called on during these hectic visits – a cast to conjure with:

The Duke of Edinburgh, The Duke of Windsor
Harold Wilson, Lady Asquith of Yarnbury
Anthony Eden (Lord Avon), Clement (Lord) Attlee
Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, Lord Brabourne
Vice-Admiral Sir Ronald Brockman, The Maharao Raja of Bundi
Noel Coward, Sir Alec Douglas-Home
Tom Driberg, General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mrs V. L. Pandit
H. V. Hodson, Vice-Admiral John Hughes-Hallett
The Maharani of Jaipur, Lee Kuan Yew
Malcolm MacDonald, Harold Macmillan
Donald McLachlan, Dr Noble Frankland
C. R. Rajagopalacharia, Major-General Sir Hubert Rance
Duncan Sandys, Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare
Field Marshal Viscount Slim, Vice-Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson
General R. T. 'Speck' Wheeler, Brigadier Peter Young
Sir Solly Zuckerman

In addition, there were numerous 'other ranks', including crew members who had served with LM in HMS Kelly, soldiers from his Burma campaign, survivors of Japanese prison camps, and so on.

My mind, when allowed to roam, is packed with all sorts of anecdotes reflecting the many months of filming; I will merely recall just a few of them – otherwise, these jottings are in danger of running to a second volume.

We started the main Far East shooting trip in January 1967. Sri Lanka, then still Ceylon, provided an early laugh for us all. On my recce trip, I was asked to make arrangements for LM to be free to attend the première of a new Raquel Welch movie. A few months later, on our arrival in Colombo, the morning headline in the *Weekend* proclaimed *'Supremo to act with sex bomb'*. It went on to report that *'Mountbatten was to co-star with the most talked of woman in the film world, sex symbol Raquel Welch, in*

a film that is to be produced by a top-ranking organisation in Britain. It is expected to be the most authentic war film ever to be made.' A couple of days later, LM received a telegram from John Brabourne: '*As requested have signed contract for you to co-star in Life and Times of Raquel Welch.*'

Singapore chalked up a personal triumph for me. The Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, threw a huge reception and dinner to honour LM's visit, in the gardens of the Istana. We had just finished filming an eyewitness report with Lee Kuan Yew talking about LM receiving the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, and his role in overseeing Singapore's independence. The whole crew had been invited to this feast. There must have been at least twenty tables, each seating ten guests and hosted by a Minister or high-ranking official. There were innumerable courses of delicious Malay food, and as custom dictated, the hosts frequently swapped tables, so that all of us could meet the Singapore hierarchy. Lee Kuan Yew settled at my table together with his Minister of Education, just as beautifully decorated bowls of quail's eggs were placed in front of each of us. "Mr Morley," said the Prime Minister, "this will be a real test to show how adept you have become with chopsticks, as these eggs usually confound our visitors to Singapore." He was right. A quail's egg is as slippery as a bar of wet soap, and with all eyes on me, I had a go – what was there to lose? And I holed in one – more luck than good management. Lee Kuan Yew congratulated me and then picked up his chopsticks, homed in on an egg, and managed to squirt it across the table straight into the lap of his Minister. Touché.

Burma was a closed country. With the exception of dealers in timber, who were occasionally granted four-day visas, it was virtually impossible to be allowed in; foreign film crews were totally banned. But as the victor who freed Burma from Japanese occupation, and with the title of The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, he was always welcomed there with open arms. But getting John and me in with the crew, called for an extra effort of the Mountbatten arm-twisting technique. Luckily, General Ne Win, Burma's despotic ruler (who had established his dictatorship by military coup d'état in 1962) paid an annual visit to the UK for medical treatment, and usually stayed as LM's guest at Broadlands. I was asked down for the weekend in the late sixties for one of these visits to meet Ne Win and help to soften him up. A despicable man, who was accompanied by Katie, his charming wife. It was a treat to watch LM's technique, which resulted in Ne Win almost believing that it was his own idea to invite me with the crew to his country. He also presented me with a huge box of Burmese cigars that was to last for years.

On our recce trip arrival in Rangoon, Vicky Miller and I were met at the airport by a Colonel and a Captain, who had been allocated to me as my liaison officers for the filming trip. They had obviously been told to co-operate fully with my requests, and were very friendly and helpful. They took us for a sightseeing tour of Rangoon, and I remarked on the fact that all the shops seemed to be shut, with no one around. I was told that it was their Poya Day, and everything always shuts for that (as used to be the custom here on our Sundays). Sadly, I noted that the following few days must all have been Poya Days, as everything seemed to be permanently closed-up and abandoned. Most men in Rangoon were wearing army uniform and it was depressing to see this rich, lush country in such a desperate state. We were booked into the Inya Lake Hotel – a huge Russian-built edifice with a cavernous dining room. We were the only guests.

When we returned for filming the following year, the official reception accorded to LM was very cordial and generous. Our locations were in Rangoon and up country in Pagan, Mandalay and at the very point where the 14th Army made its famous river crossing of the Irrawady in pursuit of the Japanese forces in 1945. As a result of the various requests I had made the year before, we now discovered that to get to these locations presented Ne Win with his own set of problems. Burma's socialist dictatorship was fighting internal guerrilla wars with minority groups, such as the Kachins and Karens. There was a permanent state of tension, and it was considered too dangerous for LM and the whole team to go by rail to Pagan. Also, Ne Win insisted on accompanying LM to these spots.

We now discovered the elaborate plans he had made. A plane had been booked for us to fly to Pagan (the old city of 5000 pagodas) and he met us on arrival. But he was not alone. His whole Revolutionary Council was on parade to receive The Earl Mountbatten of Burma. The First Secretary of our Embassy had also come up from Rangoon, and he told me that Ne Win dared not risk leaving his Revolutionary Council behind in the capital, always fearing plots against him.

We stayed in Pagan filming for two days and then went on board a 1926 Glasgow-built paddle steamer for the overnight river trip to Mandalay. This was large enough to accommodate the whole Revolutionary Council, LM and his daughter Patricia, (Lady Brabourne, the future Countess Mountbatten of Burma) who had joined the party. This ancient steamer had been converted and made moderately comfortable. John Terraine and I explored the huge engine room and discovered a line of ten large domestic refrigerators that had been purchased and installed for this trip. The whole enterprise must have rocked the Burmese treasury.

After a late on-board dinner, it was too hot to go to sleep. John and I shared a cabin and we decided to spend most of the night on deck. Gunboats, fore and aft, escorted the steamer down the Irrawady, their searchlights sweeping the riverbanks. The full moon's reflection followed us in the calm water; it was very beautiful. I asked John whether he thought that Kipling might have made the same journey on his road to Mandalay, when both of us suddenly spotted several flying fish alongside, gracefully leaping in and out of the water. A memorable night.

In the morning Ne Win and his cohorts left for Rangoon and we resumed our shooting schedule, having been given the use of one of the gunboats.

India stirs up rich memories. Our first call was New Delhi. LM and Patricia had been invited to take up the same quarters they enjoyed twenty years earlier – the Lutyens designed majestic red sandstone and marble Rashtrapati Bhawan, formerly the palace of the Viceroy and now the residence of the President. His old barber and other retainers were called out of retirement to serve their old master, the Viceroy. Wherever we went with him, massive, cheering crowds gathered. The vestiges of the British Empire, the pomp and the grandeur shrieked at you – it was very impressive.

Probably LM's most controversial event of his career was the hurried transfer of power, splitting that 'jewel in the crown', creating an independent India and the new Pakistan. We called that episode *The Last Viceroy*, and to recall those momentous few months in 1947, we met and interviewed some remarkable people who had good reason to remember the dramas of that period, including Nehru's sister, the politician Mrs V.L.Pandit, C.R. Rajagopalarchari, India's first Governor-General, and Prime Minister,

Mrs Indira Gandhi. In Rajasthan, we stayed with and filmed the Maharaja and Maharani of Jaipur, all key players in the transfer of power.

Further south, near Kota, we stayed with the Maharao (the Maharaja) of Bundi. He had served under LM in the 14th Army in Burma, and like many of the princes who had to give up power and influence as part of the 1947 settlement for the new India, he lost a great deal of his wealth. On my recce trip, when I went up to Kota to meet him to organise the shoot, and make detailed arrangements for the last Viceroy's visit, I offered to pay a facility fee for his generous invitation to put up the crew in his palace, which was some distance away from the only hotel in that area. At that time India was in a parlous economic state, and restrictions on the use of foreign currency for imports were strictly prohibited. Rather sheepishly, he asked me whether it would be possible for me to obtain a certain piece of machinery in England, and somehow bring it into the country when I returned with LM and the crew. He then explained that he was after an Evinrude outboard motor. Back in London, I got Rediffusion's agreement to this novel way of paying for location expenses, and LM, of course, was delighted to be part of the plot. So we shipped the motor (at vast expense) to Customs in Delhi, clearly marked: 'to await the arrival of The Earl Mountbatten of Burma'. It worked like a charm. When we arrived, I cleared it out of customs and it became part of our camera equipment. On arrival at the Maharao's palace, I got four of his bearers to carry it into my bedroom. Late that night, after a very long day, I was glad to put out the light and get some sleep. Shortly after I had put my head down, I heard my bedroom door being slowly pushed open, and then an excited Maharao of Bundi said: "Have you been able to grant my request?" Before I could say, 'yes', he clapped his hands to summon the four bearers who had waited outside to carry away his spoils. He followed them, and half-an-hour later, once more the door opened and two bearers brought in a large bowl of fruit and some flowers with a thank you note. The Maharao was a happy man.

Wherever we went in this fascinating country, LM was applauded, often mobbed, and the affection shown to him twenty years after independence was manifest, and rather touching.

We returned to London from this 3-months shoot in March 1967, and discovered that in the world of television, great changes were afoot.

Lord Hill, the Chairman of the ITA and his Council caused a dramatic upheaval, altering the face of ITV. In London, Rediffusion was kicked into the long grass by having to merge with ABC from the Midlands and form a newly created Monday to Friday London franchise holder, called Thames Television. The ITA announced this in 1967 and shortly after, in September, Harold Wilson cynically appointed Lord Hill, ITA's Chairman, as the new Chairman of the BBC's Board of Governors, and gave his ITA job to his old political ally, Bert Bowden, now Lord Aylestone.

So here I was, in the middle of making an important (and expensive) television series for Rediffusion, which was now to disappear from under me, and the unfinished *Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten*, about to be handed over to the new Thames Television. There were problems.

In 1966, I had set up three cutting rooms in Television House with film editors, Alan Afriat and Johnny Zambardi, and Dubbing Editor, Rosemary MacLoughlin, and five assistants. By the autumn of 1967, they were making very good progress with assemblies and rough-cuts of the first few episodes. There was still a lot of shooting to

be done, with our second four-week session at Broadlands in September and other UK locations. But all the material, including archive film was at hand to complete episode Two. I wanted to finish this as soon as possible so that I could show it to LM and especially John Brabourne in order to prove to them that half-hour episodes were a non-starter. They were easily persuaded and saw the point immediately that these programmes had to be one hour long.

As the months passed, the brand new Thames TV was making its presence felt. Howard Thomas, its new Managing Director, was making difficulties. He had run ABC Television, noted chiefly for its excellent dramas and Light Entertainment programmes, but with little contribution to the network's documentary output. I believe he rather resented that he was forced to take me and my production on board – not a good fit – was the expression used at the time. He wanted to transfer production to his people in Elstree Studios (owned by ABC) and find a way, if possible, to reduce the series to six half-hours.

I then persuaded John Brabourne that we should have a showdown with Thames and arrange a screening to make them aware, for the first time, what the Mountbatten series was all about, and with John McMillan's blessing (he was by now taking a back-seat in Rediffusion's affairs), that is what happened. It took place in our preview theatre in Kingsway and Howard Thomas brought his Chairman, Sir Philip Warter, and Brian Tesler, ABC's talented Light Entertainment producer, who had just been appointed Thames Television's first Controller of Programmes. The two Johns, Brabourne and Terraine, and I represented Rediffusion.

I knew that screening Episode Two was a good choice for this particular audience, with a rich mixture of both the life and the times. It is set in 1917 when the story of the Mountbattens could be said to have started, when the family changed their name from Battenberg to Mountbatten as a result of anti-German hysteria. Russia was swept by revolution, and the Imperial family, LM's uncle and aunt, the Tsar and Tsarina and his five cousins were murdered by the Bolsheviks, and other members of the family lost their ancient thrones. After the war, in 1920, LM accompanied the Prince of Wales on two spectacular Commonwealth Tours (I filmed the Duke of Windsor's eyewitness account of this), and he was then LM's best man at his wedding to Edwina Ashley at St. Margaret's, Westminster. They spent their honeymoon in Hollywood and the episode ends with excerpts from the Charlie Chaplin one-reeler he made with and for them as a wedding present.

When the lights went up, there was hushed silence. Then Howard Thomas turned round to me and uttered these memorable words: "It's a bit documentary, don't you think?"

Tesler looked embarrassed, but said that he quite liked what he had seen. "How long did that run for?" Howard Thomas asked me. When I told him it was fifty-two minutes, he said: "We have been told that we would be taking on half-hour programmes." "Yes, originally I was commissioned to make thirteen 30-minuters", I said, "but the moment I met Lord Mountbatten and our research began, it became obvious that we would have to go for twelve one-hour network slots." I then felt that I must risk taking a firm, if somewhat pompous, line: "It's simply that in certain fields of programme-making, content dictates the length required to do the subject justice. In any case, Mr Thomas, which fifty percent of what you have just seen, do you suggest should be junked?" Howard bristled at this and said that Rediffusion could not expect Thames TV to pick up the extra costs for hour-long programmes. John Brabourne came to the rescue and

saved the day by saying that it was really a financial problem and not a programme problem, and that he was sure Thames TV could resolve it with Rediffusion.

Luckily, I then remembered the premiere at the Imperial War Museum – LM's 'Royal Flush' with the whole Royal Family in attendance – and Howard's instinct of sniffing out good publicity took over and he became friendly. He agreed the one-hour concept, and also, that I could finish the series staying on in Television House, even after Rediffusion had pulled out for good, and that except for me (being a free-lance), my whole team would be invited to join Thames Television. And then, surprisingly, as a parting gesture, Brian Tesler turned to me and said: "Peter, I will bet you that the series will never get into the 'Top Ten', that it will never be networked, and that Rediffusion will not get an on-screen credit." I wish I had taken him on – he lost handsomely on all three counts, but I could understand his attitude. He was a brilliant Light Entertainment producer, who, later, was to rise to the highest positions in ITV. But in 1969 both Howard Thomas and Brian, having successfully launched Thames Television, must have found it pretty galling to be obliged to broadest this inherited prestige series from Rediffusion.

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I had to complete and deliver the series by the end of 1968. The cutting rooms were going at full pelt, and every spare moment I could find was spent there. But there was still the filming with LM to complete, and woven into all that were extramural activities that demanded attention. The most important was the birth of Benjamin in March – and now there were two sons to come home to in the evenings. Again I was able to be present at the birth, this time without having to rush back to a studio. Much later that year, when we had finished our last LM filming at Broadlands on a Thursday, I was asked to stay over as the Queen and Prince Philip were coming down on Friday for their annual weekend visit, and he wanted me to be there for tea as HM had taken a great interest in the filming for the series. When he introduced me, he boasted that I was the person who had produced twelve television programmes about his life and times and two sons in the space of three years. I wished that Jane could have been there. Prince Philip was out in the park riding, so for tea it was just HM, LM and myself. She was 'mother' and poured the tea and cut the Dundee cake. She was very well informed about all the fun and problems we had filming in the Far East, having received the details from LM's numerous letters. I told her that the previous day we held a special investiture for the man who had more decorations than he could ever wear at any one time, including the Order of the Garter, the Order of Merit, PC, GCB, GSCI, GCVO, DSO and many more. And to mark the very last shot for the series, I took the opportunity to invest him with the CDM and bar. This was a medal, made out of tin, and I had placed it on one of the priceless drawing room cushions, made a short speech and congratulated the recipient on never having to appear in front of the camera again. I explained that the CDM was given away with every bar of the new Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate.

We were amused! It was all very informal, and very relaxed.

Later, in 1968, The Mountbatten family was at Broadlands to entertain the whole production team and their wives for an elaborate and very generous end-of-series luncheon party. The big dining room, which I had got to know so well, was transformed into a banqueting room, seating thirty-six people. I still have the seating plan, drawn up

in pencil by LM – as always, a stickler for detail – and there were speeches and reminiscences covering the past three years. I presented LM with the much-travelled clapperboard showing the last slate number with the date. This was later installed in the Broadlands 'cinema', hanging above the fireplace close to one of Grinling Gibbons' carved masterpieces.

There was one major political hurdle to overcome. I had been tipped off that Thames was finding it difficult to persuade the other ITV companies to network the series, some saying that Thames TV was not trying hard enough. I felt powerless over this, but remembering Brian Tesler's bet – I was determined to have a go. I phoned up Lord Aylestone, the ITA's new Chairman, and told his secretary that I was representing Lord Mountbatten (this always worked!) and I was put through: "Lord Aylestone, I am the producer of the Rediffusion Mountbatten series, which Thames TV is inheriting and I have a real problem and I need your advice. Unfortunately, it won't make much sense unless I can show a completed episode. Do you think that might be possible?" He thought for a moment and then said: "I will try and help, but I don't think it would be wise to screen it here in Brompton Road (ITA Headquarters) behind the backs of Thames TV executives, and I shouldn't really be seen coming to you in Television House without the ritual of being received by your Board of Directors." I said: "There is a very grotty entrance here at the back of the building shared with the London School of Economics, and I could smuggle you up to our preview theatre on the 4th floor, with my team holding the lift door open for you, and I am sure no one of importance will see you." "All right, I will risk it but I must make one condition. I would want to bring my wife who has doted on Lord Mountbatten all her life."

And it worked. I greeted them both on arrival, whisked them up to the 4th floor and screened Programme Two. Lady Aylestone clapped her hands when the lights went up, and the Chairman of the ITA asked: "Now, what is your problem?" I explained that there was a threat that the series would not be networked, and I felt that ITV would be accused of insulting Lord Mountbatten and all his achievements, including the three years he had devoted to the making of this series. He thanked me for alerting him to this and said: "I will do my best. We must make sure that it gets a decent time slot."

And that is what finally happened. I must say that playing politics is not my scene, but I relished that particular moment.

The closer we got to the completion of the twelve programmes, the more intense grew the various aspects of publicity and promotion. This was a tough time, as I had to make sure that Thames, in their ignorance of the project, didn't screw up – luckily, I was able to get their agreement to have everything passed through my office (with my team, I was the last occupant remaining in ex-Rediffusion's Television House). This ranged from press releases, press conferences, interviews, television appearances, and above all, the intricate arrangements for the Imperial War Museum's Royal première. This was now scheduled for 19th December 1968.

Howard Thomas's enthusiasm for this occasion knew no bounds. Thames Television, his new company, exploited this prestigious publicity event with gusto and spent considerable sums on the decking out of the War Museum's cinema, with a special publication to mark it all, and the most extravagant champagnes, wines and canapés and floral arrangements I have ever seen. They mounted a live outside-broadcast covering the whole event with LM, John and I being interviewed. All thoughts about the series

being ‘a bit documentary’ and the row over the running time for each episode had been buried.

The guest list, apart from the whole Royal Family (other than the Duke of Gloucester who was too frail to attend) included Harold Wilson and the surviving past Prime Ministers, senior Ministers, the Service Chiefs, Church Leaders, senior Civil Servants, Court Officials, Newspaper Owners, and so on – a total of 230 of the great and the good, including, the extended Mountbatten family and close friends and, of course, Jane and John’s wife, Joyce. There was the usual well-orchestrated line-up for those to be introduced to the Queen and her immediate family, and John T and I took up our prescribed positions. LM arrived, presenting each of us with a small parcel, gift wrapped with Woolworth’s best Christmas paper and gold ribbon, saying: ‘Just a small gift, open it when you get home, it’s just to say thank you to you both’. The hand-written label simply said: ‘Peter Morley, Happy Xmas, Mountbatten of Burma 1965 - 1968’.

Much later that evening, all was revealed. A plush-lined leather case displayed the most exquisite circular silver gilt presentation box, 3 inches in diameter and 1½ inches deep, and inset into the lid the last remaining Viceroy’s medal bearing the Mountbatten coat of arms, and inside the lid a facsimile engraving in LM’s hand: ‘Peter Morley from Mountbatten of Burma 1965 - 1968. The whole thing was specially created by his son-in-law, designer David Hicks. A generous and highly valued memento, if ever there was one.

All the arrangements for that evening worked without a hitch, apart from a small delay right at the start, as everyone had to wait for the Queen Mother’s traditional late arrival for functions of this kind. Nobody seemed to mind.

The Queen and Prince Philip spent quite a lengthy period talking with John and me – we were the ‘tail-end Charlies’ at the end of the line-up – while the rest of the Royals slowly progressed along this long line.

The film was introduced with a short speech by Noble Frankland and when the end credits rolled, there was warm applause; I can’t remember either John or I so desperately needing a drink and when we, with our wives, mixed with this exalted audience after the screening, it was with great relief that we felt that somehow we seem to have rung a bell with them. LM was as pleased as punch, and made a point of introducing us to a host

of VIPs. It was a good launch for the series, which started its weekly transmissions on 1st January, 1969.

LM told me later that the Queen had cleared her evening engagements on the days of transmission because it was 'Dickie Time'.

In February 1969, halfway through the weekly transmissions, I was coming to the end of my stint as Chairman of the SFTA, and as I was also chairman of The Guild of Television Producers and Directors, I had to officiate at our February Awards Ball at the Dorchester. By this time, Prince Philip had persuaded his uncle to take over from him as President of the Society of Film and Television Arts, and so I was sitting next to LM at the top table at the Dorchester, with Jane on his other side. I now found myself having to follow the President's speech with my Chairman's speech – a daunting task, as LM was such a brilliant speaker. Kenneth Horne, who kept the nation in stitches with radio's *Around the Horne*, and who was the Master of Ceremonies for the awards presentation, sat opposite me.

In those days these events were not televised – thank goodness. LM and I had checked out each other's speeches in advance – I felt I needed his opinion as I was determined to take the opportunity to comment on the controversial new franchise allocations. Both their lordships, Hill and Aylestone, were at the top table. Before the banquet started, there was my Chairman's Reception of VIPs in another suite and I warned Lord Hill that I was going to be critical about his franchise decisions, which killed off Rediffusion. The old wartime radio Doctor put his arm on my shoulder and said: "Dear boy, you can be as rude as you like about me, I have a thick skin. All I can tell you is that I have made the changes because I simply don't believe in perpetuity." End of conversation.

In the banqueting hall, after dinner, as coffee was being served, the toastmaster introduced the President. LM's speech went down extremely well. He made some jokes about the production; sent John Terraine and me up rotten, saying that during these three years he occasionally referred to us as those two wizards, but most of the time as those 'two four-letter men'. And soon it was my turn and Kenneth Horne, lent across the table and whispered: "follow that!" And, with some trepidation, I did. Three years later, Peter Black, having retired as the Daily Mail's television critic, published his *The Mirror in the Corner* based on twenty years of close observation of the early years of BBC TV and the effect ITV had on broadcasting when it came into being in 1955. This is what he said about Lord Hill's franchise reshuffle:

> *'Encouraged and applauded by almost all public opinion, Lord Hill presided over a non-event that added nothing significant to programmes in number, quality or regional flavour. It probably cost £20m in new equipment, in the writing off of existing equipment, in redundancy payments to staff – some of whom, far from needing this consolation, had already gone to work for the new companies at more money than before and in some cases without even vacating their offices. The cost in morale is not measurable, but Peter Morley (one of Rediffusion's best men, the documentary maker responsible for Rediffusion's last major series, Mountbatten), tried to put it into words at the Guild of TV Producers' and Directors' 1969 Ball. Lord Hill, seated among the guests, heard him say: 'When producers and directors think about their work, they think not only about the end-product on the screen. Programme-making is a team job; so*

we think and care about the many people with different skills who make the programmes with us. For the first time, the reality of working in an insecure industry has been dramatically demonstrated. And with it have come problems of which some have yet to be solved: problems which are not easily understood; problems which affect the heart and soul of an industry. To erase old loyalties, to sever long friendships, to lose identity, is painful. To build all these things up again from scratch is very, very difficult. To make people feel aware that they again belong to something really worthwhile takes an extra amount of enlightened leadership and above all takes time. Those who expected great things from the night of July 29 1968 (when the new franchises commenced) have failed to take this simple human factor into account.'

After my speech the toastmaster announced the start of the awards ceremony and introduced Kenneth Horne. He started off in great form, and then – disaster. He collapsed on the dais in mid-sentence. A heart attack. LM leant over to me and whispered: "You're the Chairman, you're in charge. Good luck." I helped carry him out and then came back onto the dais and announced that I was sure that Kenneth Horne would wish us to carry on, and then took on his role of presenting the awards. He died before he had reached the St George's Hospital, and at the end of the evening I had to make that sad announcement. What a night.

* * * *

I had to persuade Howard Thomas to let me stay on in my office with my P.A., Jenny Over, for the three-months transmission period, as there was no one at Thames who could handle the flood of phone calls, letters and press queries. In any case, Jonathan Avery had to return hundreds of photographs to their owners, and with one of the cutting-room assistants, catalogue many thousands of feet of film for storage in the archives. Howard readily agreed, but I had to point out to him that I expected to be paid for this period, which rather surprised him. Very odd.

The reaction to the series could not have been more positive. There was an avalanche of press cuttings; the viewer ratings were excellent; it was never out of the top ten; and I know that my ex-Rediffusion colleagues were glad to see the Rediffusion credit conspicuously well displayed on the screen.

I was awarded the Royal Television Society's Silver Medal for the production, and that was particularly gratifying because the RTS was a television engineering society (John Logie Baird being one of its founder members) and at that time they only gave one annual award to a programme maker. It is a beautifully engraved coin, 1½ inched in diameter set in a velvet-lined case, and I kept it propped up on a bookshelf out of reach of Jonathan, now nearly three-years old, who thought that he could take it round to our local newsagent and buy some sweets with it.

I kept in touch with Lord Louis for the next ten years. We frequently corresponded and I was able to provide an informal after-transmission service for the many letters and requests he received as a result of the series. There was also the close connection with John Brabourne and our joint interest is the SFTA, soon to be known as BAFTA.

* * * *

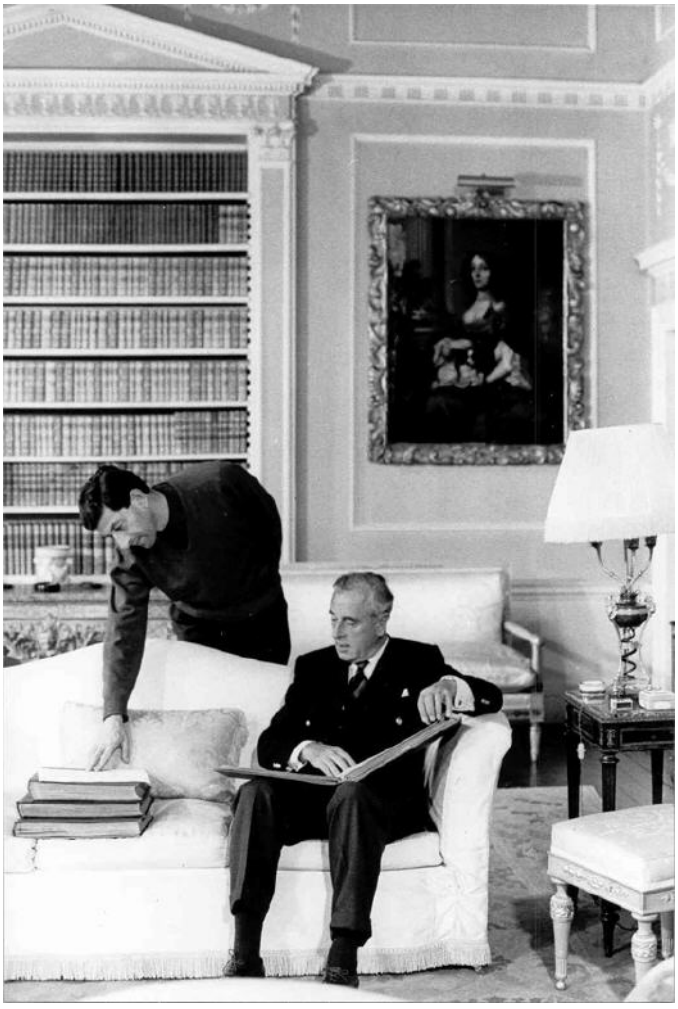
In 1979, the IRA murdered Lord Louis – and that was the end of an era.

I attended his Westminster Abbey Funeral Service with Jane. I spotted a great number of the eyewitnesses we had filmed for the series, reminding me of the extraordinary life of an extraordinary person, and the luck I had in getting to know him, and to work with him for three privileged years.

Broadlands

John Terraine Lord Mountbatten PM

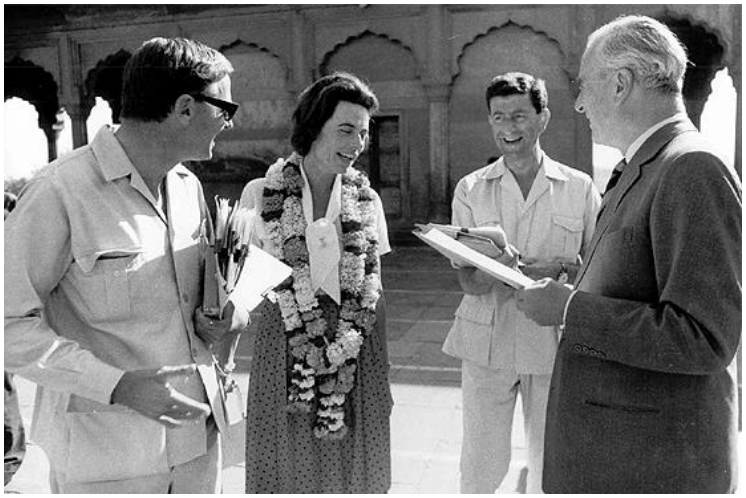
Coming to grips with the problem of deciding on the contents and style of twelve hours of television



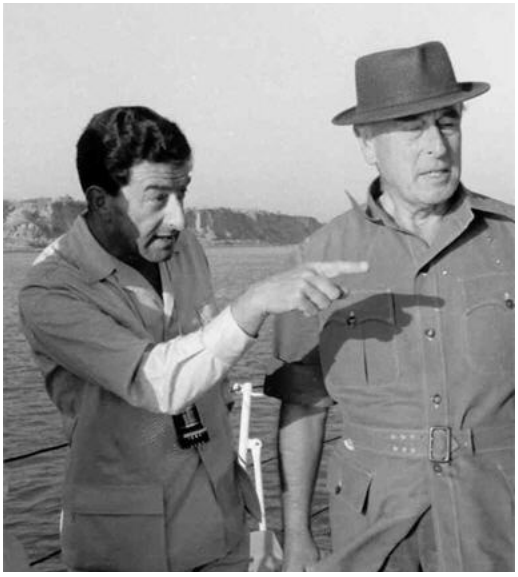
The Wedgwood Room
Introduction to the massive photographic collection

The first week in Broadlands with John T

London: Filming in the garden of
10 Downing Street

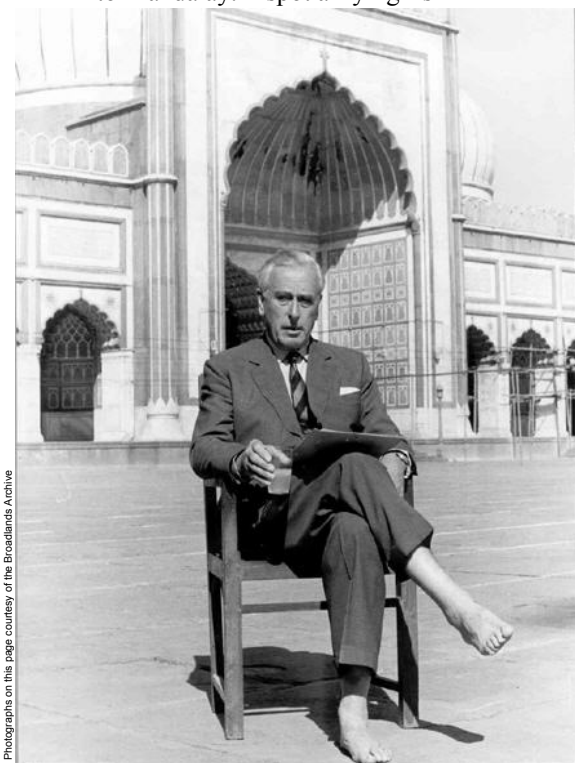


India: Patricia (The Countess Mountbatten of Burma)
joins us in Delhi



Burma: On the Irrawady on our way
to Mandalay. I spot a flying fish

Mandalay: Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia
explains the capture of Fort Dufferin



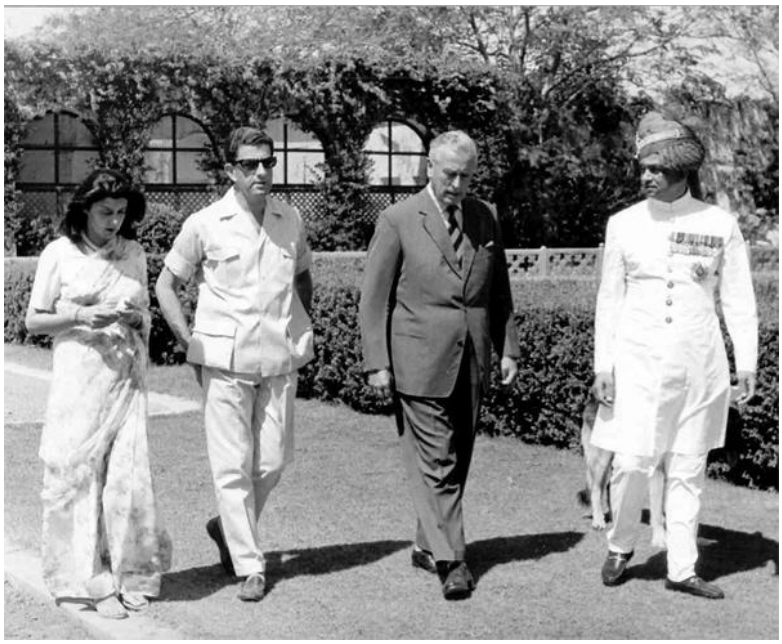
India: The Jami Masjid Mosque in Delhi
The Last Viceroy learning his lines

LM occasionally referred to us as 'the two wizards' but
most of the time as 'those two four-letter men'

C.R. Rajagopalacharia India's first Governor-General who took over from the last Viceroy

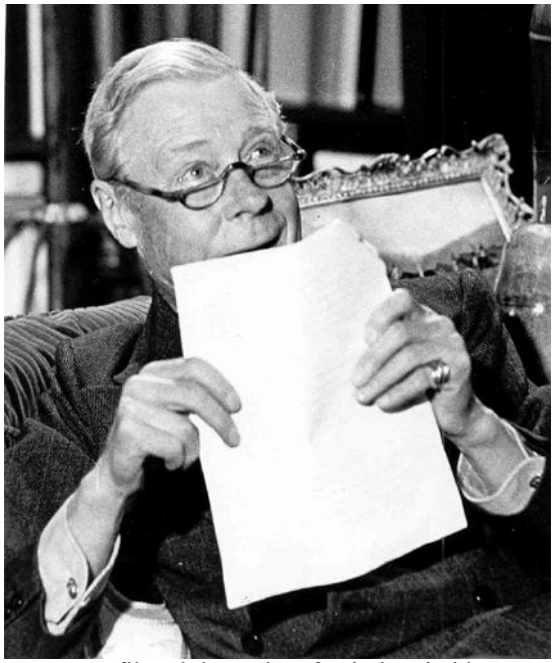
Mrs V. L. Pandit (Nehru's sister) Ambassador to the US

Prime Minister Indira Ghandi



The Maharaja and Maharani of Jaipur in their palace grounds

Anthony Eden (Lord Avon)



We filmed the Duke of Windsor in his Paris home

LM with his nephew Prince Philip at Broadlands

Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London

A model showing us filming in the Viceroy's office in Delhi is displayed in the Imperial War museum

Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London

Noble Frankland, Director of the Imperial War Museum greets the Morleys

The 'Royal Flush'
Imperial War Museum
19th December 1968

Photographs courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London

Photograph courtesy of the Broadlands Archive

Broadlands: The Mountbatten Family throws a farewell party for the whole team and their wives

Chapter 20

All my close colleagues, in fact, the whole staff of Rediffusion, had by now been given new jobs, either with the newly merged Rediffusion/ABC contractors, Thames Television, or with the new London Weekend contractor, LWT. They had all been awarded handsome redundancy payments, finally vacating their old jobs on a Friday, only to start their new jobs on the following Monday. But I did not envy them their security – I still felt, as I had done in 1955, on entering television, that I wanted to protect my independence and take pot luck with my work.

John McMillan also had a new role; he was now Chairman of Special Events for the whole ITV network. When he vacated Television House in 1968, he mentioned that, once I had cleared my Mountbatten commitment, he hoped to put some work my way. "Pete," he said, "how would you like to produce and direct a major outside broadcast for the ITV Network?" I asked: "Another funeral?" It was, in fact, the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in Caernarvon Castle, which was to take place in July of 1969.

During those first few months of that year, while the weekly Mountbatten series was on the air, John Terraine and I had thoughts about another historical series. We felt that it was high time for a television history of Europe in the 20th century – a century that saw Europe twice tear itself apart in two major conflagrations – with the Cold War now being centre stage.

I remembered only too well that during my stint producing *This Week* in the early 1960s, there was constant pressure on us to give vent to the great controversy at the time – whether we should join the European Economic Community, or not. We had many programme items covering Britain's application to join in 1961, only to be exceeded by even more items when, in 1963, de Gaulle uttered his famous 'non'.

John and I felt that we should find a way of using television to put the momentous events of the 20th century into their historical context, and try to find answers to what it means to be a European – exploring the continent's history, politics, and culture – and give some depth to the running controversy about 'joining Europe', which, as I am writing this almost forty years later, is as passionate today, as it was in the late sixties and seventies.

After several of our constitutional sessions in the Uxbridge Arms in Notting Hill, and meals in the Ark, John began, speculatively, to write thirteen outline treatments.

Also, at that time, my old friend and colleague, Cyril Bennett, who was now installed as Controller of Programmes at the new London Weekend Television headquarters, said that he would find a place for me later in the year.

I felt that there might be life after Mountbatten.

* * * *

In January 1969, Denis Forman, Managing Director of Granada Television, had taken over the role of Chairman of Special Events, and he contracted me to produce and direct the Caernarvon Investiture on behalf of the ITV Network. Although this was on a much smaller scale than the Churchill funeral, it again required the cooperation and pooling of resources from several ITV contractors.

As usual, I embarked on an intensive planning period, and in the middle of it, in May, an official cream-coloured envelope popped through our door. It was from 10 Downing Street, stating that: *The Prime Minister had it in mind on the occasion of the forthcoming list of Birthday Honours, to submit your name to The Queen with a recommendation that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to approve that you are appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.'* That was a surprise.

On Saturday, June 14th the Birthday Honours List was published, and at 7am that morning my bedside telephone rang, I picked it up and an unmistakable voice said; "I know you will find this difficult to believe, but I had absolutely nothing to do with it. Very many congratulations." And Mountbatten hung up. This was typical, and he followed it up with a very warm handwritten letter. All his life he had made sure that those who had served successfully with or under him received recognition – and he was well known for 'promoting gongs'. In my case, though, I later learned that it was the ITA, on the dissolution of Rediffusion, that had put my name forward for my contribution to the ITV network, including both the Churchill Funeral and the Mountbatten series. Apparently, this was the first time that a practising television director had been recognised in this way. There was an avalanche of letters and telegrams of congratulations from friends and colleagues, including Sir Robert Frazer, Chairman of the ITA, and the Chairmen and Managing Directors from many of the ITV Network companies.

The Investiture was held in Buckingham Palace on the 25th November 1969. Moss Brothers supplied all the gear for the occasion. Morning dress, stiff shirt, black shoes, top hat – the works. Jane and Jonathan were in the car, and as I pulled into the forecourt of the Palace, Jonathan, then almost a four-year-old, asked, "Daddy, do you think the Queen has finished the breakfast washing-up?"

We were shown up a sumptuous staircase, flanked on each side by dismounted soldiers from the Household Cavalry. I felt sure that our son would happily have taken one of them back home. We were then separated; the recipients being schooled in the investiture rituals that had to be learned. I was in good company, which included Bernard Miles, Anna Neagle, John Betjeman, Arthur Askey, Bobby Charlton, Robin Knox-Johnston, and several others whose faces were familiar.

We were all seated in the huge ballroom waiting our turn to be called to walk up to the dais to face the Monarch, while all the families and guests were seated in the gallery overlooking the action. The Coldstream Guards band was playing medleys from 'My Fair Lady' and other current West End musicals. Jane had to cope with Jonathan; always rather short on showing patience, he had discarded his brand-new velvet-collared coat and his jacket, and said he felt hungry. Jane told me later, that after consuming a very noisy rusk, and just some minutes before the Queen's arrival, he desperately needed the royal loo! They were both back in their seats in time to see me walk up to the dais to be invested with my gong. The Queen told me that she had enjoyed all twelve episodes from the Mountbatten Series. (Dickie Time, as she had called it).

We came back to our Canonbury home in Grange Grove, where family and friends were waiting for our return – bottles of Champagne at the ready. A day to remember.

* * * *

In May of that year, I made several trips to Wales with Pam Humphries, my temporary and very efficient Welsh PA, to meet the technical people for the outside broadcast of the Investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle. Also, there was a meeting with Lord Snowdon, the Constable of the Castle and designer of the Investiture ceremony, whose transformation of the castle's open-to-the-sky interior was remarkable, especially the focal point of the ceremony, which was the Royal Dais made of Welsh slate with its spectacular Perspex canopy.

Once again, ITV was in competition with the BBC, nothing had changed since the Churchill State funeral – except that this was going to be the BBC's first major outside-broadcast in colour. Their first colour transmissions had been the 1968 Wimbledon championships, but now they had acquired many more colour cameras. I had again recruited Brian Connell to be the main commentator, and we invited that master of journalism and broadcasting, Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, to join Brian in the commentary booth to provide that intricate and magical element, which only this Welshmen knew how to project.

For these national state occasions, television outside-broadcasts call for an appropriate prologue before the events of the day unfold. The one I devised for the Churchill funeral in 1965 worked really well, and now it was a question of 'follow that'. And it was Wynford who triggered the idea. He told me about the Welsh redoubt, an array of keeps and castles built by Edward I, after he had conquered Wales by defeating Prince Llywelyn, killed in battle in 1282. He then instigated a large-scale programme of castle-building. I felt that these castles could make an appropriate visual background to a short history of Wales, ending with Caernarvon castle – the focal point for this royal occasion.

Wynford then wrote a beautifully crafted ten-minute narration, describing this iron ring of fortifications which Edward I had built around Snowdonia, using quotations and poetry of the time. And the one person, whose rich Welsh voice would do justice to these words, was Richard Burton.

I felt that the most graphic way of portraying Edward's grand strategy was from the air, and I chose to shoot the whole sequence from a helicopter, and was able to illustrate the complete sequence with shots of Snowdonia, the Menai Straits, and the six castles of Rhuddlan, Conway, Beaumaris, Caernarvon, Criccieth and Harlech.

Normally, this would have been done with a film camera, but I was reluctant to use film. No matter how well it is shot, processed and transmitted, it brings with it a textural quality that makes it unmistakingly look like film, and quite different from the texture created by the electronic camera. As I was going to use twenty-eight of these, I wanted to avoid mixing these two media. And here I had a bit of luck. I was able to use that astonishing new portable video-tape recorder and camera, the Ampex VR 3000. The electronic camera was not much larger than a home movie camera, but the recorder was the size of a suitcase. The picture quality was so remarkably good, that when experienced engineers played back tapes recorded on this portable machine, they could hardly believe their eyes.

I must repeat part of the answer to a written interview I gave to the Editor of 'Film', Derek Knight, eight years before, in 1961, asking about the future of electronic cameras:

'...who knows what future video-tape holds for the film-maker. Is film out? Will the amateur cinematographer with a small electronic camera be able to strap a pocket video-tape recorder round his waist, shoot, go home and play it back on a TV monitor? I am looking forward to reading FILM in 1965, I think by then we may have the answer.'

Well here, eight years later, was the answer in spades. This new Ampex camera was first used at the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games, and ATV, the Midlands ITV contractor, purchased one of these, and when I heard about this, I persuaded them to let me borrow it, plus its ace cameraman, Jim McCutcheon. It was the first time I had seen this equipment, which recorded picture and sound onto the large 2-inch videotape, using small spools, and weighed a ton. Jim had to wear this on his back in Mexico!

I made a rendezvous with Jim and the helicopter pilot in Kiddlington, near Oxford, and we flew up to RAF Valley, on Anglesey. A small modification made it possible to have a 9" monitor on my lap in the helicopter. I could now see what the cameraman was seeing in his viewfinder, and was able to 'direct' the shooting, and what's more, call for instant playback to assess what had been recorded. Intercom between the pilot, cameraman and myself converted the helicopter into a flying one-camera studio. It was an exhilarating experience. Probably due to the shaking it was getting from the helicopter, the recorder broke down several times and we had to land high up on a flat bit of Snowdonia, where we had stationed an Ampex engineer with a full toolkit, to effect running repairs.

The next day, with shooting completed, we flew back, but this time a car was waiting for me at the Hammersmith Heliport to rush me to Shepperton Studios, for my recording date with Richard Burton, who was filming there. Then up to Manchester to edit all this material. Electronic video editing had by now also made huge strides; it was technically not available to me ten years earlier when I directed *The Turn of the Screw*.

Early in June, the ITV construction team started work on building the control rooms and commentary booth, right up against the castle's outside walls, and the vastly complicated engineering tasks began. The BBC's similar complex had been erected next to ours.

Anthony Craxton, who had been my rival producer/director for the Churchill funeral, once again was in charge for the BBC. I had not seen him since we were on the Cannes jury together three years before. He was very friendly and offered to place a colour monitor into my control room so that I could see what the BBC's output looked like. I was very grateful, and when we first 'got pictures up' two days before transmission, I was much impressed by the colour quality, and looked forward to the time when all programmes would be in colour.

I started my first camera rehearsal and run-through, including playing-in my pre-recorded prologue and historical sequence. And unannounced, a BBC engineer burst in and removed the colour monitor. I was later told by one of Craxton's assistants that Peter Dimmock, BBC's Head of Sports and Outside Broadcasts (I last saw him outside the Cannes jury room for the Churchill Funeral after I had won the Grand Prix, for which he had never forgiven me) had somehow got a feed of my prologue rehearsal, and must have felt that we had something special going for us, and reacted in this curious way.

1st July 1969 was the big day. The ITV contingent of cameramen, engineers, and the production team, totalling 200, were on parade and ready. The four-hour broadcast went

off without a hitch, and Brian and Wynford excelled themselves. Well, there was one hitch. I can't remember at which point during the ceremony this happened, but quite close by there was an almighty explosion and my array of thirty-two monitors, in unison, leapt an inch off their seating, luckily without sustaining any damage. Mercifully, the explosion, courtesy of some Welsh Nationalists, was not heard within the castle's walls, and 'the show must go on' axiom prevailed.

As usual on these occasions, when the BBC and ITV show their separate interpretations of the same event, the natural instinct of a majority of viewers is to switch to 'Auntie', making ITV ratings look pretty sick. But in spite of it being in glorious black & white, the ITV version of that day's ceremony got an extremely good press – and once again the ITV bosses, whose companies contributed to its success, sent letters of congratulations.

* * * *

London Weekend Television was now in deep trouble. Having won their franchise and started operating in 1968, it soon became clear that some of the company's promises, stipulated in their franchise application prospectus, could not be met. They had promised a regular, well-funded output of documentaries and current affairs programmes, but the advertising revenue for a weekend-only TV station could not sustain this. Also, there was resistance from the rest of the ITV network to screen a lot of this programming. Michael Peacock, who had torn himself away from the BBC, was the Managing Director, with Cyril Bennett, his Controller of Programmes. They offered me a year's contract to make 'occasional' features and documentaries of the type that they had hoped would be a regular contribution. On the very day that I arrived in Station House, LWT's temporary headquarters on the North Circular Road, Michael resigned, together with a number of his key executives, leaving Cyril, for the time being, to run the show more or less on his own. Not a brilliant start for me.

I only made one programme for LWT, which was transmitted at the very end of 1969. Cyril had met a bright and amusing 21-year-old student, Gyles Brandreth, and they came up with an idea: to investigate the effect of a decade's television on a boy who was aged ten at the start of the sixties – someone who had been brought up with a rich, daily diet of television. After several sessions with Gyles, I decided to narrow down his ten years of viewing to news and current affairs programmes, and to explore the effect on a young mind of the drip-drip exposure to the outside world through the small screen.

It turned out to be a 90-minute programme (probably a bit too long), with lots of newsreel clips of the decade, chosen and annotated by Giles, and an intriguing quartet of 'experts' in the studio to analyse his comments and pronounce their ideas of the effect of television on young viewers. They were Michael Foot M.P., Iain Macleod M.P., Fred Friendly (Ed Murrow's partner at CBS) and Lady Longford.

I called the programme *A Child of the Sixties,* and it was transmitted on 27th December, between Christmas and New Year, and pretty well sank without trace. There was very little press reaction, but LWT seemed to be well satisfied. In the following years I often spotted Gyles Brandreth's name popping up in the press. He eventually

became a Conservative M.P., author, After Dinner Speaker, journalist and his many accomplishments include winning the National Scrabble championship.

It was two years after this short stint with London Weekend Television that Cyril tragically died – far too young. I had lost a true friend.

* * * *

For me, the end of the Sixties also marked the end of a fascinating chapter in my early programme making adventure. I had had the great fortune to be in at the very beginning of ITV, and although we did not realise it at the time, I belonged to a small gang of people who are now labelled the pioneers of the medium. As a freelance director (unique at the time), I had been on contract to Associated-Rediffusion, a contract that somehow renewed itself every quarter since 1955. That had now come to an end, and I was about to experience great changes.

For the first time, I began to realise how precarious a freelance existence really is, and what amazing good luck I had enjoyed up to that moment.

Investiture of Prince Charles

Caernarvon Castle

1st July 1969

Richard Burton recording the prologue

Brian Connell joins me for another State Occasion

Brian Connell in the Commentators booth with Wynford Vaughan-Thomas

'On the air' with twenty-eight cameras

Buckingham Palace - my second Investiture that year
Jonathan, aged three, shows off his father's OBE

Chapter 21

The start of 1970 was curious, to say the least. My contract with LWT still had nine months to run, but they had no room in their schedules for the sort of programmes they had hired me to make. Cyril Bennett had left and Stella Richman took over as Controller of Programmes. She expressed little hope for further work, although she asked me to work up some programme ideas, should the Company's fortunes change. So I thought that I would have a lot of time on my hands, but all sorts of interesting things were happening, and I now had to adapt to a new regime that called for having several balls in the air at the same time.

I soon found myself taking part in the debate concerning a future second channel for ITV. ITV2 had been mooted by the Government, and the ownership, structure and financing of an additional television service became a controversial issue. Should it be complementary to ITV or be its competitor? Should it be a non-profit making channel and still carry commercials? 1976 was to be a watershed year for television, with both the BBC Charter and the ITV franchises due for renewal. And for the next few years, those of us who cared about the future of television, got deeply involved.

In my capacity as an ex-chairman of the Guild of TV Producers and Directors, and its successor, the Society of Film and Television Arts, and also as a freelance programme maker, I attended meetings and made speeches. There were sessions with Brian Young, the ITA's Director General, and after seeing Harold Evans, editor of the *Sunday Times*, I wrote a lengthy piece for his paper stressing the importance of the channels being complementary, and possible ways of achieving this. At the time, both the ITV contractors and the advertising industry lobbied for a competitive role for ITV 2, with both channels scrabbling for a maximum audience, thereby dealing a fatal blow to the idea of public service broadcasting. What we did not know at the time was that it would take many more years for a second channel to emerge in the shape of Channel 4, launched in 1982, which was independent, non-profit making, ran its own commercials, and was partly subsidised by the ITV companies – with a special remit that would preserve the public service broadcasting ethos. It proved to be a great success.

* * * *

At the same time, our History of Europe project was shaping up nicely. There were many sessions with John Terraine, who was making good progress with the outlines. But then we had another new idea. It came about, because I felt that it would take so very long to find a backer for 'Europe' that we should also have a one-hour project up our sleeve, one that might be easier to sell to the BBC or an ITV company. John readily agreed as he also felt the distinct need to stave off hunger. And over a drink in the Uxbridge Arms, the idea for this 'one-off' was born.

Experience over the past few years had shown again and again, that documentary television programmes, especially those with a rich story to tell – however well made, however attractive – when compared to the written, printed word, suffer from an element of superficiality imposed on them by the medium. There is just so much that the viewer's eyes and ears can absorb at any one time: the demands made on the senses are formidable, and as so often happens, there is the danger of an information overload. I think of a single programme being like a moderately sized painter's canvas, and to retain the viewer's attention, one must tell the story using broad-brush strokes. With the luxury of being given twelve hours, as with Mountbatten, and increasing the size of the canvas by a factor of twelve, one is still obliged to use the same broad brush.

Our single programme idea was based on the frustration John and I felt while making the Mountbatten series. It centred on a traumatic event in Mountbatten's early life; an event, which had a profound effect on him, and which shaped his career – the rise and fall of his father, to whom he was devoted.

Prince Louis of Battenberg, left Germany in 1868, aged 14, to join the Royal Navy. He settled in England, became a naturalised British subject and had a brilliant service career, rising to the very pinnacle of the Senior Service – First Sea Lord, the professional head of the Royal Navy.

On the eve of World War 1, in July 1914, there was a test mobilisation of the Reserve Fleet, with its start and end dates having been posted to other nations, as demanded by international convention. On the weekend of 26th July, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, the Foreign Secretary and the rest of the cabinet, had, as usual, gone away for the weekend. But on the next day, Monday, the tens of thousands of men who had been called up for the test mobilisation were due to be paid off – not to do so, not to demobilise, could be construed as an act of war. Prince Louis, the First Sea Lord, alone in London, took the momentous decision not to demobilise, ordering the Fleet to stand fast, and as a result, with the outbreak of the Great War a few days later, on 4th August, the Royal Navy, thanks to him, was ready and at action stations. He was lauded for his wisdom and courage to bring this about.

But almost immediately, intense anti-German feeling, fuelled by the most poisonous propaganda (dachshunds were kicked in the street) caused anyone with a German name to be called a traitor. This made it impossible for Prince Louis of Battenberg to stay in office, and he was forced to resign – hounded out of office. For Mountbatten, now a 14-year-old cadet at Osborne Naval College, it was shattering news. He felt deeply humiliated and swore then that he would, as an act of vindication, climb to the top of the Navy, as his father had done, and one day attain the rank of First Sea Lord. Which he did.

Sadly, in the twelve-hour-long Mountbatten television series, we could only devote about six minutes to this event, which had such a profound effect on him. This illustrates the limitations in this type of programme making: the evergreen dual problem of 'how much to put in and how much to leave out', in order to minimize the danger of information overload.

So we developed our idea: we would take these six crucial minutes from the Mountbatten series and expand them into a one-hour programme, investigating the effect of the hysterical anti-German propaganda during the First World War. We took these thoughts to Jeremy Isaacs, who was now Head of Features at Thames Television,

and who was very interested, but put us on hold until he had finished some forward planning for Thames. We kept our fingers crossed.

And then the plot thickened. I got a call from John Grist, head of the BBC's Talks and Features Department, asking me out to lunch. He told me that for some time his department had tried to persuade Paul Fox, who was then Controller of BBC-1, to give the go ahead for the BBC to produce a follow-up to their very successful *The Great War,* with a new television series on World War II. As John Terraine had been one of the two writers of *The Great War,* and together, we had made the Mountbatten Series, he thought that we would be the ideal pair to take on this task.

The reason he gave, why Paul Fox was in two minds about this idea, was understandable. Only a couple of years before, the BBC had launched colour television, and Paul feared that to sink a huge sum of money and valuable air-time into programmes that, for obvious reasons, had to be in black and white, might slow down the spread of colour receivers. Grist felt that a decision was imminent, and told us that Derek Amore, No. 2 in his department, would keep in touch with us.

So there we were, with a series on Europe bubbling away in the background, a real prospect of a programme on propaganda for Thames, and now the possibility of a long stint with the BBC on a subject that we were both extremely interested in, especially John – a highly regarded military historian and expert on World War I. We were wined and dined by Derek Amore every few weeks, eagerly awaiting for white smoke to rise from Paul Fox's office.

I will always remember the next phase. I was at home and I heard a motorcycle courier stopping outside our house in Canonbury, and the plop of a letter landing on the front door mat. It was from Jeremy Isaacs, saying that he wanted me to know before I heard it on the evening news bulletins, that Thames Television was announcing the start of work on a 26 one-hour episode television history on World War II. A blow if ever there was one!

He did add in his letter:

> *I regret having had to be so secretive about this, especially as you confided in me. But I knew before talking to you of the possibilities at the BBC. (Indeed it was partly being approached myself and then left dangling which made me realise that Thames could do this on its own.)*

He then went on to say that this should make no difference to my making a programme on propaganda for Thames, together with John.

I phoned John to break the bad news to him. He was deeply shocked, almost speechless, he had really set his heart on the BBC venture, and we decided to speak in the morning. I sensed that he would be off to the Uxbridge Arms in Notting Hill to drown his sorrows.

I waited till the evening and called Paul Fox at his home, knowing that he would be equally distraught. Betty Fox answered the phone and told me that she had heard the news, but that Paul had taken their boys up to Birmingham for a football match and that she would tell him to phone me once he got back. The call came about midnight and there was Paul: "I am not prepared to talk about it, Peter. Give me at least a few days and then try again." He could not have relished the thought of going to his office in the

morning with a great deal of egg on his face – also, the BBC was bound to get the stick from the press.

I luckily recalled a piece of advice from Lord Mountbatten when he listed one of the elements of good leadership: 'the art of making good news out of bad news'. And it worked. Because next morning, when I spoke to John, I said to him that as the BBC has been caught with its trousers down, we had a new pair for the Corporation – namely *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Both of us got rather excited at the thought, and I decided that I would ignore Paul's 'few days', and call him. I waited till about 11am and said to his secretary that it was an urgent call, and she put me through. Before he could protest, I said: "Paul, you have really been caught out, and I think I have the perfect project for you to take the place of the now ambushed World War II idea." "Right", he said, "meet me at my usual Notting Hill restaurant at 1 p.m." I have always admired those who can make instant decisions.

Before setting off to Paul's favourite watering hole, John and I had spent an hour on the telephone, marshalling our thoughts and fine-tuning our presentation. On arrival, I could not help noticing that two tables away, of all people on that day, The Rt. Hon. Roy Jenkins M.P., deputy leader of the Labour Party, renowned for his knowledge of good claret, was entertaining a lady to lunch. But he was even better known as the great advocate for Britain's future in Europe (later he served as president of the European Commission from 1977 for four years) and I thought this might turn out to be good omen for us. And it was.

Paul was taken by our proposal. In fact, he said that he wished he had thought of the idea himself. We recalled the early sixties, when he was editor of BBC's *Panorama* (and I was producing *This Week*) and the numerous filmed items and studio discussions we screened on the running controversy of Britain's role in the European Community. He agreed that a major television series providing an essential background to the history of this complicated continent would be of great value, and fitted the BBC's public service role really well.

He asked us to be patient for a month or so, as he could not commit the BBC to such a vast project without consulting his Programme Board first, but he was keen to go ahead, and would probably place it with Dick Cawston's Documentary Department. This was good news, as Dick and I knew each other well, as we were both council members (and past chairmen) of the SFTA, and quite soon we were to be fellow Foundation Trustees of BAFTA.

* * * *

In May 1971, I got a call from Thames Television. Jeremy Isaacs was keen for us to go ahead with the Propaganda programme. I was given an office in their headquarters in the Euston Road, and came across many ex-Rediffusion colleagues, who had joined Thames at the demise of the old company. We took on Kate Haste (now Lady Bragg, married to Melvyn), as our general researcher, and Maurice Raine as film researcher. They started digging up anti-German propaganda material, and such was the wealth of what they found, that to do justice to this fascinating subject would really require at least two one-hour programmes – but we had to do with one. As usual, the 'broad brush' principle ruled, with the agony of having to spike a great deal of valuable evidence.

The words, 'anti-German hysteria', were only mentioned once in the Mountbatten series; now we were able to expand on it, and it was no wonder that Prince Louis of Battenberg was hounded out of office shortly after the start of hostilities in 1914. The virulent, grotesque utterings in the daily and weekly press beggar belief – here are some choice examples:

> *The Weekly Dispatch*, September 1914
> *The truthful war picture would present Belgium as a slaughterhouse with the peace loving, unarmed inhabitants being killed in thousands by the Germans. Rivers of blood, mountains of innocent dead, sacked towns and villages – these have marked the advance of the Germans. The wild orgies of blood and debauchery, the atrocities outrages murders and mutilations, the ruthless violation and killing of defenceless women, girls and children of tender age, have been, it is now admitted by Germans themselves, carried out with their full knowledge, and even as part of the actual plan of campaign of their War-Lords. The civilised world stands aghast at the Kaiser's atrocities. Humanity cries aloud for vengeance.*

> *The Weekly Dispatch*, September 1914
> *The Germans bayoneted a Belgian child to death for calling "Vive l'Angleterre." They killed their own wounded to save time, and cut off the hands of British medical orderlies. Some of the British wounded and killed, says a correspondent, were placed on a hayrick by Germans, who then set the hayrick on fire.*

Horatio Bottomley, was the founder and editor of the scurrilous weekly magazine, *John Bull*, which enjoyed a huge circulation. He also attracted large audiences to his frequent public meetings. Here are some examples of his nauseating style:

> *Every German, old or young, naturalised or not, is a potential spy. The time has surely come when the nation must force the Government to take a strong and decisive line. Our naturalisation laws are a scandal. We want men to loathe and despise the Hun. Yes, we must have that League of Hate. The Kaiser and his hellish horde are possessed by the soul of Satan. You cannot naturalise, an unnatural beast – a human abortion – a hellish fiend. But you can exterminate it.*

Bottomley had a habit of inserting small boxes into the middle of his *John Bull* newspaper columns with messages like these:

> Refuse to be served by an Austrian or German waiter.
> If your waiter says he is Swiss, ask to see his passport.

> If by chance you should discover one day in a restaurant that you are being served by a German waiter, you will throw the soup in his foul face; if you find yourself sitting at the side of a German clerk, you will spill the inkpot over his vile head.

Bottomley was at one time the richest man in England, a swindler, twice bankrupt, an expelled M.P., and after the war spent seven years in prison. He died in 1933 – a penniless drunkard.

But there was another thriving medium making appeals to the public. The cinema. While we were making the programme, we learnt from film historian, John Huntley, that during the First World War there were, in fact, 5,000 cinemas in this country, serving an audience of 20 million people a week, compared to only 4 million a week today. And the opportunity to exploit film as a propaganda medium was not lost on the Ministry of Information. It sponsored live action 'shorts' that were quite outrageous. The one we included in our programme show two German soldiers in a Belgian town, confronting a woman holding her baby wrapped in a shawl. They tear the baby away from its mother, knock her to the ground and then throw the baby on to the pavement.

Then there were the first animated cartoons for the big screen. Lancelot Speed, G.E. Study and Bruce Bairnsfather were the brilliant pioneers in this new art form, and they too took every opportunity to provide the vitriol of propaganda.

We called the programme *The First Casualty – a* quote from Hiram Johnson who was Governor of Californian during the First World War:

'The first casualty when war comes is truth –
and the assassin of truth is propaganda.'

The programme, transmitted later that year, was well received. Without doubt it was an eye-opener, and the contribution from one of our 'experts' was very much to the point. Cecil Harmsworth King, a press lord himself, spoke eloquently about his two illustrious uncles, the press lords, Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere, who, between them owned *The Times, The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, Glasgow Herald* and *Leeds Mercury*:

> *"In wars it is said, no holds are barred. To interest the ordinary man in the street, it was not enough to talk about the military menace of German armed forces, it had to be made an emotional subject, and I'm sure that it was with this in mind, that my two uncles, rather stepped up the propaganda, in the form of stories of terrorist acts by German troops, which subsequent investigations have shown to be quite false. I'm not sure, whether they deliberately concocted these stories, but if they didn't they certainly seized on them when they presented themselves, it's just the material to provide an emotional basis for an anti-German war."*

John, who spoke his own narration, brought the programme to a conclusion with these words:

> *"In the end, of course, it all back-fired. In 1918 the British people arrived at Peace in a mood of hatred and revenge – and the Peace they helped to make, enshrined in the Treaty of Versailles, faithfully reflects the conflict between their bad emotions and their good intentions. Soon afterwards it began to be apparent that most of the war-time propaganda had been lies – sheer, down right lies. People were sickened to learn how they had been deceived – how they had allowed themselves to be deceived, <u>wanted</u> to be. Many now became distinctly cynical about "devilry" in any form. And this proved to be a pity, because, by a stupendous irony, a regime came to power in Germany in 1933, which did, indeed, deliberately cultivate brutality, mass-murder, torture, genocide. The slow reaction of so many people against the Nazi threat must, at least in part, be attributed to the excesses of Propaganda to which they had been subjected during the First World War."*

What we tried to show in our programme – sparked off by Mountbatten's father being forced to resign as the professional head of the Royal Navy – was that Propaganda had secured its own defeat. Truth had, indeed, become a casualty.

Chapter 22

In October 1971, John Terraine and I signed our contracts with the BBC – an adventure that was to last almost four years. For me, it was a moment to savour. In my very early days in television I came under the influence of people like Grace Wyndham-Goldie and Huw Wheldon, and I cherished an ambition that one day I would have the opportunity to make programmes for the BBC. And now it was to be a major assignment, with a budget of over half-a-million pounds.

At the time, it was almost unheard of for a couple of outsiders to bring a large project to the BBC, and we had many meetings with Paul Fox (Controller of BBC-1), Dick Cawston (Head of the Documentary Department) and the BBC's legal people to find a formula to accommodate this novel situation. We insisted on retaining some of the copyright to this project, but historically, the BBC never granted residual rights to producers or directors. So we asked a much respected showbusiness lawyer, Laurence Harbottle, to handle the negotiations on our behalf; and he picked up and dusted off a dormant company called Casterbridge Productions (from then on, jointly owned by John and me) and that enabled the BBC, by contracting Casterbridge, to accept, somewhat reluctantly, our demands.

But there were more important details we had to agree before we could start, such as John's view – the historian's view of Europe in the twentieth century – of the contents of the series, and my ideas of the style we should adopt once the contents had become clear.

The treatments John had worked on the previous year now came into their own, and what was emerging was that this was going to be a European look, rather than a British look at Europe, and it would deal not merely with politics and major events, but would cover the whole spectrum of social, cultural and artistic change during the first seventy-five years of the 20th century. We wanted the very essence of this television history to be its internationalism; its international approach to themes that are often too narrowly treated, hoping that it would appeal to viewers not only in Europe itself, but wherever European influence has been felt.

It seemed to make good sense both for political and commercial reasons, to ask a German television station to come in as a co-production partner, and Paul Fox had little problem in getting Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR) from Stuttgart to get involved. As usual, at that time, for major projects such as this, the BBC recruited Time-Life Films as a co-production partner, which more or less guaranteed an American sale of the series.

Sadly, the term co-producer turned out to be a misnomer – co-financer more accurately described the role. I sent scripts across the pond to Time-Life, and to this day, over thirty-five years later, I have still not had a reply. SDR showed some interest; at least they provided a German academic, a professor of History, to be one of our consultants. I had hoped for much more.

I had also persuaded Paul that as this was John's view of European history, that he should be seen and heard delivering it. Apart from a good, clear speaking voice, he had a very good screen presence, and Paul, who had seen *The First Casualty,* agreed. But then he called us back for another meeting to say that Time-Life had stipulated that they wanted a 'name' to front the series, as without one, they would have problems selling it

to the Networks in the States. John and I were appalled by this. The thought of an actor delivering John's words was totally unacceptable; alternatively, giving that role to a well-known television presenter would be equally bogus. So here was a serious dilemma. Reluctantly, we came up with a possible solution: Peter Ustinov. We felt, that if we had to have a name, it needed to be a true 'European', and if ever there was one, it was Ustinov, whose immediate family tree had branches reaching out to France, Germany, Russia, Switzerland and Italy, with a small twig even pointing to Ethiopia.

The next step was to nail down the two distinctive roles for Terraine and Ustinov, the historian and the raconteur. Easier said than done, and we embarked on our first trip to one of Ustinov's homes, hidden in its own vineyard on the shore of Lake Geneva. He was most hospitable, very funny, pleased to be asked to take part in our series, and most willing to co-operate in any way we desired. He appreciated that a clear distinction had to be drawn between the two roles, and although he felt that he knew a fair bit of European history, he was certainly not an historian, and would leave all that to John and avoid any possible clashes. But he felt that he could colour in some of the 'drier' bits of history, and I suggested then and there that his role could well be described as the 'embellisher'. And that went down well. Over dinner that night, he paraded a whole string of colourful, even hilarious, anecdotes of the sort, which he thought John and I might find helpful, and he readily agreed to read John's scripts, and write his own proposed contributions for our consideration. We came back to London feeling moderately optimistic about our solution to Time-Life Films' unwelcome stipulation.

The words we chose, to give this curious dual role a certain amount of logic, were embedded in the opening titles of each of the thirteen episodes:

The Mighty Continent
A View of Europe in the Twentieth Century
Written and Narrated by
John Terraine
With personal comments by
Peter Ustinov
Produced by
Peter Morley

And to make sure that the audience was kept in no doubt, Ustinov introduced himself at the start of the very first episode with these words:

> *"This series of programmes is the story of the thorny road which Europe has travelled in the last 75 years, as seen by one British historian, John Terraine, who will tell the story in his way, and embellished by comments from a mongrel with antecedents in most of the countries described - myself - a collaboration, in other words, between a professional and an amateur."*

* * * *

I was given a suite of offices high up in the East Tower of the BBC's White City Television Centre, which housed Dick Cawston's Documentary Department, and put together my team, which in the final year of production grew to over twenty.

My unit manger was Chris Berry who masterminded the budget and the schedule, and I was lucky with Annie Hewitt, my very experienced P.A., who knew how to circumnavigate the 'BBC system' to get things done quickly.

My associate producer was Brian Lewis; in the film business he would be called 'second unit director'. He did a magnificent job, using a second BBC film crew, shooting some of the material that I simply could not include in my heavy schedule.

Jane Ades handled the elaborate picture and documents research, while Maxine Baker scoured the world's film archives. Colin Reed was the historical researcher who worked very closely with John Terraine.

In the cutting rooms, Alan Tyrer, the senior film editor, arguably the best in the BBC, with two other editors and their assistants, also had their work cut out with daily rushes and masses of archive film flooding in from the laboratories.

John and I, sometimes with my P.A., went on several extensive recce trips all over the Continent, which for me was a fascinating learning experience under John's expert, witty and thought-provoking tutelage. Periodically, we visited Peter Ustinov to discuss details with him, and to make him aware of the way the programmes were shaping up. These were always highly entertaining sessions, and he lived up to his reputation of being a most generous host.

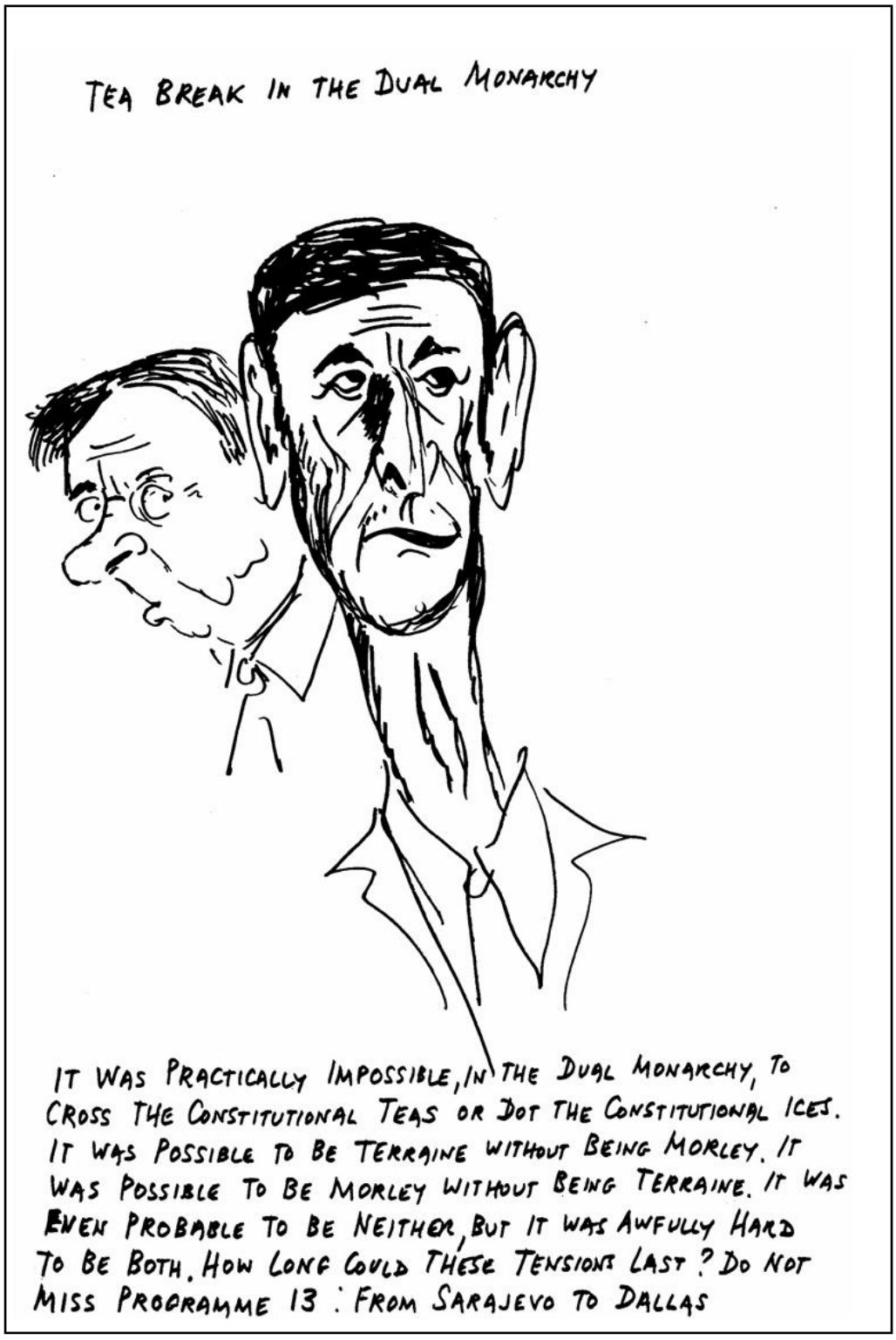
But then we made a worrying discovery. To our surprise, Ustinov did not really show the interest in John's scripts that we had expected. What he really wanted was to come on location with us once we started shooting, and make up his contributions on the spot and deliver them to the camera. Had we been making a series of 'Peter Ustinov's view of Europe in the 20th Century' that might have worked extremely well – giving total freedom to his exceptional talents as a raconteur. But that was not the purpose of the exercise. A big problem.

We started filming in Vienna, and after the first day's shoot, Ustinov and I had dinner together at Sacher's restaurant, and I began to realise the very essence of our problem. We were discussing John's scripts in general, and he said that the trouble was that John believed in total clarity – the academic's approach – and that he had an aversion to that. "The moment you have clarity" he famously said to me, "you're lost." Here spoke the master of improvisation – his convoluted style of storytelling with its clever, elaborate use of language, thinking on his feet, playing to and with the audience – all this conspired against clarity, but it made him one of the world's great raconteurs. This multi-talented man, a genius if ever there was one, should, in fact, never have agreed to play second fiddle to the main creator of this project – a project which he knew would not be under his control.

Now I began to understand that this 'European mongrel' (as he described himself) we had harnessed for the series might turn out to be a serious liability. John and I had to make doubly sure that his contributions, on which we had pinned so much hope, would not undermine John's view of European history. Luckily, we were alerted to this early on, and although occasionally it caused great friction, we managed to contain it. And as a result, there were many last minute script alterations to accommodate his contributions, many of which we knew we would not be able to use; often I had to go off and shoot extra scenes to create a fallback position so as to make sure that we could 'adjust' things in the solitude of the cutting rooms months later. And on the whole, we got away with it.

The atmosphere on location with our star occasionally became prickly, but on the whole, once a day's shooting finished, we managed to maintain a friendly and light-

hearted atmosphere. He really was wonderful company, never at a loss for a good story, and he often got out his pen to doodle caricatures of John and me, usually on paper table cloths, when we were enjoying an evening meal – his way of getting his own back on us:



Looking back on it now, I had almost forgotten the extent of our filming and the heavy schedule we had set ourselves. We criss-crossed the continent, shooting in a rich mixture of locations:

Paris	Brunete	Dachau
Versailles	Rome	Belsen
Arromanche	Sermoneta	Remagen
Oradour	Monte Cassino	Vienna
Brussels	Berlin	Blaenau
Strasbourg	Munich	Budapest
Geneva	Heidelberg	Warsaw
Madrid	Nürnberg	Leningrad

Being on location is one thing, but the real magic only happens in the tranquil atmosphere of the cutting room. That is where one sees the results of all the hard location and research work – that is where one gets one's comeuppance. And as we had three of these on the go at the same time; it was an exciting and concentrated exercise in programme making. I spent most of my time with the editors, with John coming in periodically to see our progress, to discuss alterations, and to give him the room to hone his final narration scripts.

I screened the first three rough-cuts to Dick Cawston, and that was always rewarding. He came to each viewing fresh, and as a very successful documentary maker himself, it was valuable to use him as a sounding board – one gets so close and involved with the job in hand that an outsider's view, especially Dick's, was most helpful.

* * * *

The series finally went on the air, in peak time, on BBC-1 in November 1974. The BBC instigated a great deal of publicity, and the press coverage was huge. On the whole, it is fair to say that *The Mighty Continent* enjoyed very mixed reviews. There were those who thought the series too superficial; others could not see the logic of Ustinov's involvement; some said that with the recent transmissions of Thames's *The World at War* series, and The BBC's *Empire* series there was a surfeit of historical programming. On the other hand, there were also some excellent reviews, but the most telling, as always, were the viewing figures. After all, these ambitious series are made for the viewing public and not the press. And the BBC was satisfied, not only with the stark viewing figures – on average over five million, which was high for documentaries – but also with the BBC's Audience Reaction Index, which showed a 77% approval rating, with a huge mail bag of approving letters from viewers. These figures were sustained for all thirteen episodes, with the last one being aired in February 1975.

Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR) transmitted a German language version later that year, where it was very well received, with some excellent press reviews; then in 1976 it was shown in the States on PBS, where I collected the Documentary Award from the Columbus Film Festival.

When it was all over, I had mixed feelings about my longed-for stint at the BBC. I was never made to feel that I was member, albeit only a temporary one, of this great Corporation. I had hoped that I would feel part of it, but tucked away, high up in the East Tower with my splendid team, I might just as well have been in a suite of offices in the West End. I missed the camaraderie of fellow programme makers. As time went by, I could understand my disappointment; it was no one's fault. After all, I was a freelance, that rare breed almost unknown inside the BBC at the time. Nearly all of their producers and directors were staff people, and I think that I must have been looked upon as 'a visiting stranger'. Not only that, but the Department's jealously guarded traditional 'Tuesday Night Documentary' slot was handed over to me, pre-empting for thirteen weeks its regular output, and that probably did not make me the most popular visitor. Also, not long after I started my contract, Paul Fox, who had championed this series, left his post as Controller of BBC-1 in 1973, to take over as Managing Director of Yorkshire Television. His successor was, Brian (Ginger) Cowgill, and I never knew whether he approved Paul's 'work in progress' legacy that he had inherited – in fact, there was no contact with him at all, although John and I got a note of thanks from him, all of six months after we had left. One other strange memory of that time is the astonishing fact that apart from the first episode, which was shown to the press, and three other programmes seen by Dick Cawston in their rough-cut state, the series went on the air unseen and unchecked by anyone else from the Corporation. I have never understood how that was allowed to happen.

I have in my possession a digest of viewers' letters, which the BBC compiled, and to this day they make gratifying reading. *The Mighty Continent* was shown in many countries, and together with the solid video cassettes statistics of the series sold in the States, especially in the educational market, it makes me look back on the three years with the BBC as well worthwhile; an experience which I am glad not to have missed.

It was now April 1975, and so it was back to situation normal: 'what next?'

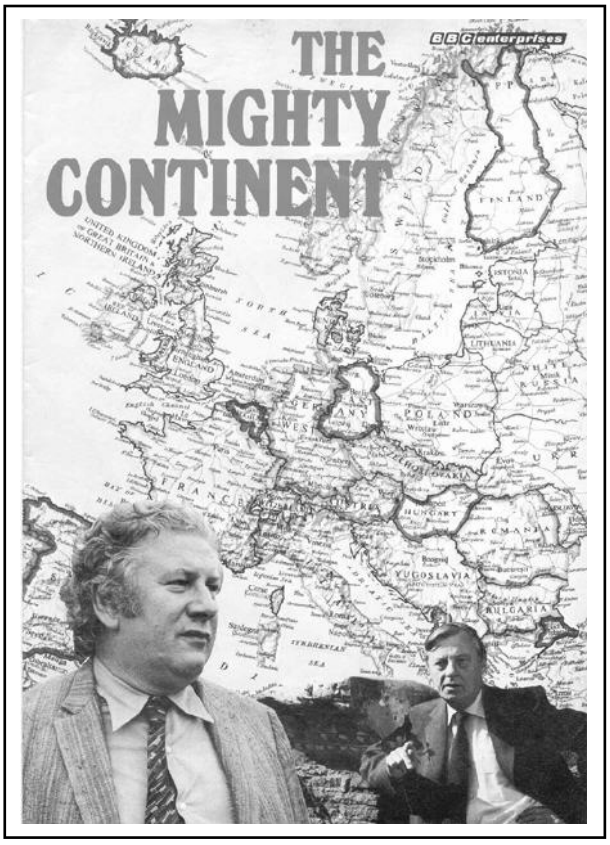


Image courtesy of the BBC

Cover of BBC brochure

Image courtesy of the BBC

In the Forum in Rome. Teaming up with John Terraine again for another three-year stint

Image courtesy of the BBC

We shot in ten countries and had endless script discussions

Image courtesy of the BBC

Italy: In Rome's Forum John Terraine delivers the closing link to the series

Image courtesy of the BBC

Image courtesy of the BBC

Vienna: Filming with Peter Ustinov in the Schönbrunn Palace

Images courtesy of the BBC

Leningrad: Naval cadets visiting the cruiser Aurora which fired the first shot in 1917 marking the start of the Russian Revolution

Image courtesy of the BBC

Spain: Valle de los Caidos, General Franco's monumental shrine

Image courtesy of the BBC

Germany: Built by Speer, the massive focal point of Hitler's Nürnberg Rallies - good skateboard venue for today's children

Image courtesy of the BBC

Germany: Monument to millions of Nazi victims

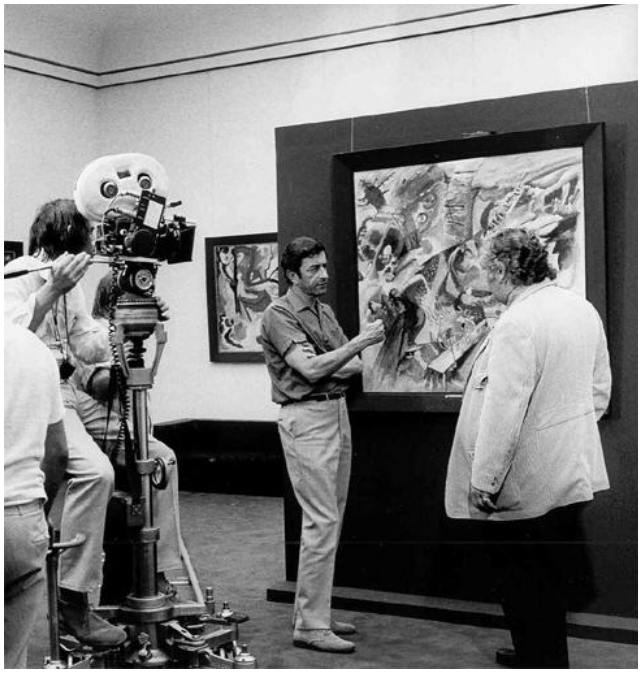


Image courtesy of the BBC

Germany: The Blaue Reiter Gallery in Munich with Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc and many others

Image courtesy of the BBC

The Berlin Wall in the Bernauer Strasse

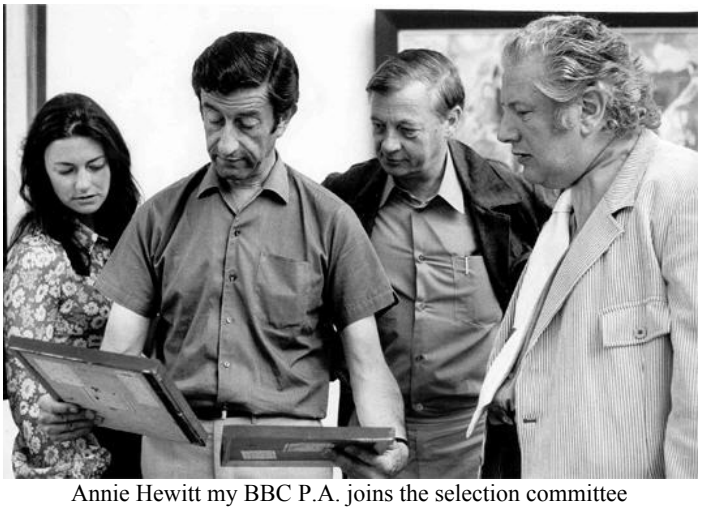


Image courtesy of the BBC

Annie Hewitt my BBC P.A. joins the selection committee

Image courtesy of the BBC

Newly erected memorial to unknown victims shot fleeing across the river Spree

End of Part Three