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BBC HISTORY ARCHIVE

Mr.Geraint Stanley Jones.

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BBC ORAL HISTORY

G.S.JONES

SIDE 1

GILLARD June 26th .. 1991 and for the Oral History of the BBC, this is Frank Gillard about to begin a conversation with Mr. Geraint Stanley Jones in his office at S4C in Cardiff.

You don't mind me calling you Geraint, do you?

JONES No, no, much easier.

GILLARD Geraint, broadcasting made an enormous impact, did it not, on the whole society in Britain when it was introduced, Radio and Television. But it has always seemed to me that it was in Wales that it was most wholeheartedly embraced and regarded with respect and enthusiasm, more so than any other part of the country - maybe I'm wrong - but I've held that view right down the decades. Have you any comment on that?

JONES Yes I think that's true Frank. I think .. and maybe the reason is that Wales, a small nation, living next door to a rather large one, lacking in self confidence over the years, perhaps, and lacking in national institutions unlike Scotland in that .. that is, we haven't got our own legal system, we haven't got our own system in terms of religion and in terms of organisation. We lack national

institutions and I think, therefore, that when broadcasting came along, the nation embraced it and being a culturally orientated nation as well, a nation of speech and music, maybe it embraced it more than other places have for those reasons. It certainly had a tremendous influence on life in Wales. I think it's had a unifying influence. It's also at times had a divisible influence - we'll get onto that when we talk about the influence of language and disruptive forces. But by and large, I think over .. over the past fifty, sixty years its influence has been a unifying one and what we have now of course is .. is an institution called broadcasting, primarily in the BBC but now others have come along and are part of one institution called broadcasting.

GILLARD Yes. Well I'm glad you confirm my view. Now we're really talking about the history of the BBC but it's got to be wrapped up this morning also with the history of Geraint Stanley Jones to some extent, and you .. you got your first contact with the BBC up in Bangor. Now I'm .. let's deal with Bangor now, lest we forget it later on.
It's always seemed odd to me that a rather remote and smallish place, the hint of .. the focus probably of a sparsely populated area should have had such a key position in the history of BBC in Wales. Can you comment on that?
(CUT)

JONES Well the history of the BBC is the history of the people who work for it and undoubtedly the

history of BBC in Wales is .. is .. was very much influenced by .. by the history of one man, Sam Jones who was Bangor. There's a phrase in Welsh which .. which .. which .. which says "Babi Sam yw BBC" which is a .. an .. part of an Anglian .. one of the Welsh literary forms which says it all about Sam. Sam, as far as Wales was concerned was the BBC. And he created in Bangor an academy, I suppose. An academy of young people. He influenced my generation and generations before me because of his tremendous enthusiasm, passion for broadcasting and what broadcasting could do for this nation of ours, Wales. Wales .. Sam was the best kind of nationalist. The best kind of nationalist, someone who was passionate in terms of wanting to preserve the culture of his nation. And he did it by creating a broadcasting service which was popular, and in order to do that he had to recruit people and he recruited them simply because he .. he showed what enthusiasm he had .. he was very .. he was partially deaf which was interesting in those days. My first encounter was with him in Broncastell in Bangor, the old station in Bangor, I went to see him. And there he was listening to some hymn singing with his ear on .. on .. on the loud speaker, only just about hearing it and I said .. I said to myself, what a strange man in .. a strange environment. But he was a powerful force in broadcasting and he created in the days of .. you must remember that Bangor, of course, it was during the war, ITMA came from Bangor, lots of other Light Entertainment shows came from Bangor. And I think he'd learnt a lot from those days because after the war he then created Welsh versions of these .. that's what they were .. really

were. And I got involved as a student in Bangor which is what happened to a lot of people of my generation and previously and .. because he would invite you in. He searched the university and the colleges around Bangor for talent, he came to our various rag shows and the like, and .. and sought people out and said, "Come in and have coffee with me," and then he said, "Why don't you write me a script," which is what I started doing and then, "Why don't you write a song," which is what I was then doing and "Come in and sing it." And it starts like that.

GILLARD Bangor was a sub centre so to speak. The main headquarters in Cardiff .. and Bangor's facilities must have been very limited.

JONES Very limited .. yes, the facilities were very limited indeed. And most of these programmes were done .. there was the Penrhyn Hall of course which was .. which was the town hall in Bangor, which was rented by the BBC and in the Penrhyn Hall, out of the Penrhyn Hall came ITMA and out of the Penrhyn Hall came NOSON LAWEN and many other shows which Sam created and in the Penrhyn Hall there was drama and there were childrens' programmes and the like. But they were very primitive indeed. I mean compared with broadcasting today extremely, exceedingly primitive. But a lot of it was done on the road of course in ancient .. ancient outside broadcast vehicles as we would see them today, which wandered the hills of North Wales and .. and .. and it was there I suppose that

Welsh broadcasting had its first .. first touch of the vox pop and the first encounters with ordinary people expressing themselves in ordinary everyday language because hitherto I think that broadcasting had been rather formal.

GILLARD The main headquarters in Cardiff, I knew them quite well. They always seemed to me to be terribly cramped.

JONES Yes, Park Place in Cardiff which was rented I believe from the university, near the museum there, they were, again, a row of Victorian houses which had been converted and .. I remember the canteen at the back which was very cramped indeed and yes, exceedingly cramped, but very lively.

GILLARD That's true, yes. And often if you cram people together it's livelier .. the result is a more livelier unit -

JONES I think what you had in those days and I've experienced this at other times, but certainly in those days. There was a mission to succeed in broadcasting. I think that broadcasting was relatively new in Wales, a new experience in Wales and they had .. there was certainly a postwar mission to make this thing called broadcasting succeed in Welsh terms. And in Welsh terms, in both languages, because in radio .. radio was vital and vigorous in English as it was

in Welsh. CHILDREN'S HOUR in English was as .. as important to me and my generation as was Owra Plant in Welsh and so it was a very bilingual service and very vital to the community.

GILLARD Yes. Now, you came in in 1960 and you had a couple of years working in Radio didn't you, before you moved on into Television. And those were the days, of course, of what was called I think the Welsh Home Service, am I right?

JONES That's right.

GILLARD Now, this in fact was a service which drew its programming largely from the basic Home Service network but came out of it, 'opted out' was the phrase used wasn't it, from time to time at the discretion of your own people .. not dictated by anybody else in order to provide programmes for Wales, am I right?

JONES That's right. The Welsh Home Service, unlike today where you have a service dedicated to .. to Wales Radio Company .. Radio Wales, as you have in Radio Scotland and .. and Radio Ulster and the like. In those days there was only one basic Home Service which served the population in speech, as opposed to what was it Frank, the Third Programme then, yes, which served it in music. And the Welsh Home Service had its strands which were produced in Wales for Wales and they included news in the morning, something at

lunch time, included certainly CHILDREN'S HOUR .. and at about half past eight at night, usually but specially on a Thursday night there was some light entertainment .. it had included WELSH RAREBIT, it had included Tommy Trouble, Aneurin Evans and all these people. It .. it .. it .. it included a great deal of feature material, of speech and of plays. You had people like David Griffiths and DJ Thomas working in .. in Drama; you had Emyr Humphreys, a distinguished writer, producing plays .. you had .. the best Welsh actors of the day coming down to ... because they were mostly working in London in those days, there was no real theatre in Wales .. which was again getting back to the original question, I suppose, - Wales has been .. has been the theatre, the BBC in Wales was at that time the theatre, the music hall, the concert platform and the debating chamber.

GILLARD Now on the Welsh Home Service in the pattern you've described, how did you cope with the bilingual problem, we're bound to talk about the bilingual problem in this interview. Let's begin now.

JONES It seemed in those days to be coped with rather easily but maybe society was different then. There wasn't the .. there wasn't the tension in .. there wasn't the linguistic tension in society in those days that there was later on. I .. I suppose the reason for that was that .. that there was not the realisation that the language, the Welsh language could die in a few generations unless someone did

something about it. It was much more .. it was healthier and therefore people were not as sensitive to it and there was not the sensitivity on either side. And so as I recall, it was much easier to have a bilingual service. It later became impossible to sustain that. But you would have .. you would have AWR Y PLANT, CHILDREN'S HOUR on whatever night, Tuesday night in Welsh and you would have it in English on Thursday night. And there didn't seem to me, as I recall, too many complaints about that. It was an easy situation and people were not used to having all that much radio of course, or all that much television in those days. They weren't .. they didn't have that feeling of deprivation that they had later on.

GILLARD Of course in addition to supplying the needs of your domestic audience in Wales on .. on the Welsh Home Service, you did contribute to the basic Home Service network I think and you also presumably contributed to the other BBC networks, namely the Light Programme and the Third Programme.

JONES Yes. Mostly I think to the basic Home Service because I think we were .. certainly we're not .. we may not be as much today .. but we were a nation of talkers and one must remember that Dylan Thomas first appeared on .. on the Welsh Home Service out at Swansea and there were others like him and there were writers .. who later became television writers - Alun Richards created the ONEDIN LINE later on and other people .. and Paul Ferris, John Morgan, Kingsley Amis -

these people were .. were .. were the familiar figures who were writing and appearing on the Welsh Home Service. But you also had music. You had a forty four piece orchestra called the Welsh .. the BBC Welsh Orchestra, which I found myself balancing with .. as a studio manager in my early days with Ray Jenkins. Ray who was a supreme broadcaster. I mean, he was the only man I've ever seen who would conduct a Haydn symphony with .. to a stopwatch because it had to be live and it had to .. you had to hit the news at one o'clock and if it didn't, then .. .. it wasn't considered to be a good performance. But the last movement very often was taken at a terrible rate. So .. but (LAUGHS) .. but no, there were .. there were .. there were major contributions to the networks in radio .. in speech, in drama, in the feature documentary mode .. and you had Philip Burton of course .. I now recall .. from whom Richard Burton .. Richard Jenkins took his name - PH Burton who was a Features producer in Cardiff at that time before he went to America. So there was a sound tradition of speech and drama.

GILLARD But we mustn't also forget that you did some very good light entertainment for the Light Programme.

JONES Well there was May Jones and there was .. there was WELSH RAREBIT and out of WELSH RAREBIT there was Tommy Trouble and there was Harry Secombe and there was a host of other people .. Ivor Emmanuel and all these people. Shirley .. no Shirley Bassey, she turned down, she didn't ..

didn't .. she didn't recognise Shirley Bassey's talent ..

GILLARD Oh ..

JONES .. until much later. No, there was light entertainment and .. but .. and after May Jones's time there was a demise in light entertainment in Wales because Wales has not produced that kind of .. of showbiz entrepreneur; we've been more on the cultural side .. we've been far too serious over the years and in fact it's one of the great .. been one of the great challenges of broadcasters in Wales to produce light entertainment and it's as difficult today as it was in those days. But May did and .. and WELSH RAREBIT was very successful.

GILLARD One more point about those early days when you were in Radio in 1960 to '62, the .. Wales, a mountainous country, extensive, but sparsely populated in many areas, it must have been terribly difficult to cover .. the reception problems must have been gigantic.

JONES Yes. I .. I do .. the reception problems have only just recently been resolved reasonably satisfactorily. I mean, from the very early days, one was quoting reception of .. of the various channels. It was common only to have reception of about 40% of the population. Only .. only recently have we .. have we pushed that up .. after many many years to about 90% and .. and of course Wales was

tackled last .. Wales and Scotland came last in the queue of transmitters always because of the population base. South Wales was all right but even South Wales was a problem because you had the Valleys and you had .. you had to actually build more transmitters to cover Wales than any other part of the United Kingdom.

GILLARD Now let's move on because in 1962 you moved on. You left Radio, you went into Television and these were your Current Affairs years I think it would be right to say would it? What were the television facilities available in Wales then in 1962?

JONES Well there weren't many. We had a .. we had a .. we moved into the chapels of course, .. I talked about the BBC Welsh Orchestra .. were .. came .. its broadcasts were made in the chapel somewhere in Cardiff and the first television studio was .. was a chapel. It didn't have permanent facilities, it was what we call a drive-in; it was an outside broadcast parked outside the .. outside and the cameras wheeled in .. over a weekend usually to a great many exciting ..'cos it was black and white .. and we had this tradition in radio of .. of very vigorous and exciting drama which was transferred to television. David Griffiths and DJ Thomas made the leap from radio drama into television drama and I remember .. being a junior production member on .. on HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY, the first production for television with Stanley Baker and Sian Phillips and the rest and I remember how .. HOUSE

UNDER THE WATER and UNDER MILK WOOD in television for the first time. We .. we had regular strands, live strands on BBC Television .. it's extraordinary when I think back to think that we were actually making .. producing drama on a Friday night at half past eight on a Friday night, live from this old chapel and the cameras were breaking down regularly and you would then, you know, end the performance with one camera but with an inventive producer, we seemed to get through it all. And we were producing an awful lot of material for the network, more for network, possibly, than for home consumption in those days because the opt-out had never been heard of. You couldn't opt transmitters out in those days.

GILLARD You .. you had some regular .. programmes, series, items, though, didn't you daily, I mean, I'm talking about News and Current Affairs. How did that run?

JONES Well in English, there was WALES TODAY, there was .. there was a daily news programme. As did most other regions I think in those days. The West of England had one, POINTS WEST and there was WALES TODAY. But I suppose the major breakthrough in .. which is when .. when I moved .. really moved over to television, a daily programme called HEDDIW .. TODAY was created by another of these people from whom .. for whom broadcasting owes much, Nan Davies. Hywel Davies was Head of Programmes in those days, asked her to create a daily magazine programme at lunch time in the Welsh language .. it was the first time it had ever been tried and

she gathered together a team of young people and we started this in .. in '62-ish, '61,'62 and it ran until, well until about five years ago and it's only now changed its name, it's there in essence really .. but it wasn't an opt out and this programme was .. was seen of course nationwide and it was quite extraordinary that people on the tube in London would have seen HEDDIW even though they didn't understand what it was all about, but it was actually a network programme because we didn't have the facility of making it anything else. But what that programme did .. was to prove that you could actually produce a professional programme in the Welsh language. Were it not for HELIU there would not be an S4C today, there would not be Radio Cymru which has services in the Welsh language. The first time .. it was a major breakthrough in professionalism in Welsh and I think we proved to the world that actually you could deal with any subject through the medium of Welsh.

GILLARD We must touch on one further point in these years. This is the transmission limitation. The fact that for Wales and for the West of England there was just one transmitter which had to be shared between everybody, which was a very considerable problem as I know, because I was on the West of England end of it but every time you did something in Welsh it meant that the viewers in my region had nothing to look at because BBC had only one channel in those days.

JONES Yes, I mean, that was .. that was a terrible time and more so for .. for the people in the West of

course because they were .. at least when the West did something we could understand the language but for most of the time when we were doing something, the West .. was .. had to put up with this strange language from across the water. And what happened, of course, was that because of this largely, most of the Welsh programmes were moved to the middle of the night. We didn't start broadcasting until everyone else had finished and I .. we would sit there in this chapel .. (LAUGHS) .. in the docks in Cardiff, waiting for something to end, COME DANCING, or whatever it was and then we would start up with a lively sports programme or something .. and very often at one o'clock in the morning. That's how Welsh broadcasting really started in terms of a service for Wales and it was .. it was that .. it was <u>that</u> more than anything else I think which began the call for a decent service in the Welsh language and it was there .. then I think that troubles began in terms of broadcasting. Before that it was fairly relaxed.

GILLARD The .. West got its own transmitter system in 1964 I see from the records. And that freed you and from that point on, again according to the records, Wales was producing twelve hours of television every week, seven hours in Welsh, five in English.

JONES Yeah that's about it. There was a .. there was a massive explosion in '64 of activity because before then we were only producing the odd hour and so suddenly .. and in television terms to go from one or two hours up to seven a

week meant a massive explosion in terms of activity, in terms of equipment, in terms of money, in terms of everything, not the least in terms of talent. And it was a huge challenge and Hywel Davies was the Head of Programmes and I don't .. I think his major achievement I think was actually getting .. getting us all on the air. I actually produced the first programme to go on air in that new mode in 1964 on a Sunday lunch time and it was immensely exciting. But there again, and it was .. it was .. I mean you .. you had then almost a Welsh language service and you had more than any part in the United Kingdom, you had a service in English. But the search for talent was .. was .. was very difficult indeed and the search for talent in light entertainment more difficult than anywhere else. But you had, I mean, another of the individuals I think which were important, you had someone who was an academic, a philosopher but had always been inclined and goes back to Sam Jones again because he was a student in Bangor and .. and was broadcasting in the very popular NOSON LAWEN in those days and he became BBC Wales' first Head of Light Entertainment, sung with big bands in America and he'd written songs, ... and he .. he left academia for about ten years and then took over, took the challenge of creating a light entertainment department and did it with .. with considerable success because again there was no .. you were talking about amateurs in Wales as you were in . in most places outside London I suppose. The .. the broadcasting scene was largely .. largely amateur as .. as radio was. I mean radio .. radio .. the acting scene in radio was full of amateur .. amateur .. amateur actors. And so you had nothing to

begin from. You had a repertory company of a few .. few professional actors in Radio which were transferred to Television and you had one or two singers and dancers who had appeared on the local stage and out of that was created a professional repertory light entertainment company.

GILLARD What was his name?

JONES Meredith Evans ..

GILLARD Now the more you did in Welsh of course, the more was demanded it seems to me.

JONES That's right.

GILLARD You know, the appetite fed on itself and grew and grew .. and the demand increased. Now who were the chief .. who were the leaders outside the BBC, of the great campaign for more and more and more broadcasting in Welsh?

JONES Well there was no Welsh Language Society in those days. The campaign later on was taken over by what was called the Welsh Language Society which was a bunch of young .. young student actors. No, the call initially came from the res .. respectable end of Welsh society, the Welsh establishment. People like Dr. Iorwerth Peate who was Curator of the Welsh Folk Museum here in Cardiff, very respectable. People like, the then .. oh yes, Saunders Lewis .. whose

influence was immense but who was an academic in those days. There was of course Gwynfor Evans even then, who was active in politics as .. as a relatively young man but .. but he took a very .. leading part later on of course. But in those days it was very much the Welsh establishment, the national eisteddfod, whoever happened to be the archdruid in those days would have taken a leading light in all this. It was letters to THE TIMES daily, it was all that. It was on that level rather than activist protest in the way that we saw later on.

GILLARD Ah .. now before we move on, a word about the big captains of the BBC in Wales in the .. in the 50s, 60s. Let's start with .. with Alun Oldfield Davies who was Controller for twenty five years I think, or so.

JONES Yes, Alun Oldfield of course was the .. the .. the .. the .. the .. <u>the</u> distinguished figure in broadcasting for many generations and for many of us. A man I admired enormously and .. one of the BBC's diplomats .. didn't seem to me to have, although I was .. you must remember I was very young in those days and he was my Controller and I was a .. I was afraid of him in terms of his personality, his size and his position. But he never seemed to me to have the passion for broadcasting that many of us have had subsequently. He wasn't .. I mean, he was .. he was I suppose .. (LAUGHS) I talked earlier about the importance of .. of .. of broadcasting in terms of a Welsh institution, he was the one who made the BBC in Wales a Welsh institution. Not a lot to do with

broadcasting but in terms of an establishment institution. I'm not sure what his influence because I don't .. I was too junior I suppose. I'm not sure to what extent he was actually influencing the programmes on the air in the way that people have had to do subsequently.

GILLARD Well I knew him of course well and I think your comments are very shrewd, let's say no more. Now, Hywel you've mentioned already, Hywel Davies, but I mean, he really was brilliant wasn't he?

JONES Hywel, of course, yes .. had a mission, he had a vision about broadcasting. It was Hywel's vision .. the transfer, the creation of BBC Wales which was a transmitter function really but he created an entity called BBC Wales. He had a vision about the kind of broadcasting, he had .. and he of course .. he delivered that wonderful address on regional broadcasting sometime in the sixties where he elaborated on his theories, on his vision and it is the address which I have quoted many many times subsequently, where he talked about Regional Broadcasting as being the concert hall, the theatre and all these things. No, Hywel .. Hywel .. Hywel had a .. he was .. he was analytical, he had vision, he was exciting and he was a performer .. performer himself. He had a great ego, which is not a bad thing in broadcasting and he died much much too young.

(CUT)

BBC ORAL HISTORY

GERAINT STANLEY JONES

SIDE 2

GILLARD Stanley Jones and we're now on Side Two. And we're talking about the leading figures in broadcasting in the BBC and Wales over .. over the decades. Aneurin Talsan Davies.

JONES Well Aneurin was a very fine producer. He was a writer. He was a chemist by profession. But he .. he was an academic by inclination, I think. But a very fine writer and a producer and he .. a .. a of documentaries and producer of documentaries. And a very good assistant Head of Programmes. Although he seemed to me, again, to be .. to be .. to be able to find a great deal of time to do the things which I've never been able to find time to do in .. in <u>that</u> kind of position which is to write and to meditate and .. and to be part of Welsh society in a way that people in those days seemed to be able to. But he was a very find broadcaster and left his mark on .. on .. particularly on radio.

GILLARD Mm. Geraint you've mentioned quite a few others, in passing, as we've gone along but are there any others you would like to single out.

JONES Well I suppose it was .. it was ..

Lorraine was probably the best producer there was .. Lorraine Davies who was head of children's programmes - just before my time but she was still around doing freelance work. She was Hywel Davies's wife who was .. who was the most professional producer I ever met and worked with. Fearsomely professional and I think had there .. had there been more people like Lorraine Davies throughout the history of BBC Wales then I think its professional standing, in terms of the rest of the broadcasting world, would have been supremely high because she was a tough professional and maybe I learnt a lot from that, somewhere along the line.

GILLARD Mm. Yes. What about Huw Wheldon and his influence on Wales?

JONES I got the impression, and I got to know him quite well in later years, I got the impression that he was always around. But never forget the fact that Huw was turned down for a job in BBC Wales - Aneurin Tobin, I think. When Huw was in the Arts Council, tried to become a producer or something in BBC Wales in those days in radio and .. and he was turned down for that job. And I don't think he ever forgot that. (LAUGHS) Be.. because that must have hurt the great Wheldon pride a great deal. But he .. because Huw was becoming more and more influential in management circles in the BBC, I got the impression as I went .. became Head of Programmes and later, that nothing really happened to BBC Wales without Huw having nodded his head in London. I think that they .. they

respected his judgment, although I never .. was never too sure about his judgment about Wales because where .. Huw Wheldon's Wales was not quite my Wales. Hugh Wheldon's Wa.. Wa.. Wales was an establishment Wales which was .. which was passing quickly.

GILLARD Mm. Let's move on. The .. what was .. what was the position of the members of staff who didn't speak Welsh? Did you have any who didn't speak Welsh? Was it a requirement?

JONES No it wasn't a requirement - never was a requirement and .. and this was .. this was not really understood. It never was a requirement in terms of administrative or .. or engineering staff, technical staff. It was only a requirement for producers who were working through the medium of Welsh itself. So there was no really .. real .. there wasn't a re.. they hadn't .. there wasn't a real problem over the years until you got into the age of job opportunities. I don't think there was a real problem here until the expansion, the massive expansion, of the si.. of the mid-sixties, into television. Where there was a feeling that people were losing out. Not so much in terms of becoming a producer, because you could become a producer without speaking Welsh, become a performer, whatever else. But you could not become Head of Programmes ..

GILLARD Aah.

JONES .. and .. because to be Head of Programmes you had to speak both languages and .. and work in both languages. And it .. it's .. it's <u>that</u> which has always been the .. the stumbling block. And whether that can be resolved ever I'm not sure. I'm not sure whether you could have .. you could not in those days have had a .. a Controller who didn't speak Welsh. You had one later on whose Welsh, when .. when he came into the job, was fairly rusty but he .. well he quickly learnt it. But I think it .. it was that which .. which was difficult for those who didn't speak Welsh. Not in terms of, actually, being a producer.

GILLARD Of course there was a great rumpus over a Chairman of the Broadcasting Council who didn't speak Welsh?

JONES There was Rachel Jones. Yes, before. I don't really remember Rachel Jones very much but .. but there was a terrible rumpus and .. and that, I think, was .. I don't think anybody would dare to do the same thing ever .. ever .. ever again I shouldn't think because that went .. that became a very political rumpus.

GILLARD Let's have a reference to a great landmark of the end of the sixties. 1969, I remember it well because I was there, when the .. the new Broadcasting House, in Llandaff, was opened. When Broadcasting House in London was

opened, Reith said, "This is a symbol of where the BBC has .. has reached stature in ..

JONES Mm.

GILLARD .. in society." Did you feel the same about Llandaff?

JONES No. It was .. the problem with Llandaff, of course, was that television had just overtaken radio ..

GILLARD Yeah.

JONES .. and there was no television at Llandaff. And so, rather than being this great symbol for what .. which it was created, at that time, it was a White Elephant. Because you had there wonderful radio studios and it was .. it .. it was caught in the middle. Television was taking over from radio. Radio had not .. had not surfaced as a different kind of medium - post local radio and a new kind of communicative radio services. Llandaff subsequently, in radio terms, became very active indeed. But you had, in those days, empty radio studios and no television. And so, unfortunately, it .. it was .. it was not a very popular building. Because most of us, my generation, were then .. by then were working in television. And in cramped chapels around .. around the city. And you had this radio edifice which was not being used in

Llandaff.

GILLARD Mm. Tragedy. That was put right, of course. We'll come to that ..

JONES It was put right.

GILLARD .. You were, round about that time, had moved away from current affairs - I don't know whether it's away from but you were mainly concentrating on features and documentaries weren't you?

JONES Yes. I was .. I was a bit of a dogsbody then. I .. I'd done, whatever it was, nine years in .. in a .. in a daily programme - ending by editing it. And had had enough and .. and this .. thought I'd better get on with something else. And my .. my job was .. was producer, features - documentaries. But I actually did a bit of everything. From COME DANCING to SONGS OF PRAISE to a .. to .. to POEMS AND PINTS to Light Entertainment to singing and dancing - everything. A wonderful time, <u>absolutely</u> wonderful. And a lot of music. And so I really enjoyed myself then in those days. In those few years, actually - too few probably. I .. I always dreamt of becoming a distinguished producer. I never did. I wa.. I .. I .. I was persuaded to do other things. But, no it .. it was the time when .. when producers were able to dabble at everything and enjoy themselves.

GILLARD Yes.

JONES Before - we were all expected to specialise in one thing or the other. So I .. I enjoyed those years.

GILLARD We talked earlier about the radio reception problems in Wales - the television reception problems must have been horrendous?

JONES Yes. Television reception - and interestingly enough now that I'm back in Wales I .. I had a canter round the course the other day to find out what was left. And there are only about two black spots left in Wales now which can't be resolved in terms of reception. But in those days, no .. our .. our Engineering Information Office then was .. was probably the bi.. biggest office in the BBC. Because there were constant problems with reception and <u>most</u> of them from the valleys were unable to see television. Subsequently, there were .. there were relays built all over the place. Most of North Wales was unable to get it. And you only had the sort of southern and northern belts. And it took many, many years and now we're down .. this week I checked, this week, for another reason and .. and we .. we're only now getting about forty calls a week and .. into this building, about reception ..

GILLARD Mm.

JONES .. which is a measure of .. but it's taken this long.

GILLARD Yes. Long time. You moved very quickly on then, though, from 1973 - from then to '81 you were either Assistant Head of Programmes or Head of Programmes. Well, did you enjoy moving away from the creative work to the .. the rather stodgy jobs?

JONES No I think .. it .. it all happened, of course, because Hywel Davies died - young. And there was gap, there was a generation gap, in BBC Wales and it took many years to .. to plug that gap. And I suppose I was one generation down. I had not expected to .. to be faced with this problem for ma.. if ever, for many, many years. But it .. it .. there weren't too many people around who had that kind of potential, I suppose. And it was thought that .. that I should move in .. into .. into that. And Huw Wheldon was part of that, of course. I remember having this strange discussion with Huw, which was supposed to be my formal interview for being Head of Programmes, which as really a four hour lunch with Huw Wheldon, where he did (LAUGHS) most of the talking. And when he .. was really trying to find out what I wanted to do with BBC Wales. And when I said what I wanted to do he didn't like it. Because I wanted to create something which was going back. Because what had happened in Wales, because of the explosion in television in sixty-four and the need to actually

fill seven hours in Welsh and five hours in English, I think that we had stepped back in terms of professionalism. And we were no longer recognised on the network as being able to produce programmes of .. of great calibre. There was another reason for that, I think, in .. in that we had switched from black and white to colour. And the regions, of course, you will remember, Frank, were the last to be colourised. And, therefore, there was a period of time when Wales' offerings to the network were not needed - not simply for .. for creative reasons but because they were not in .. in colour. And so there was gap. And I thought that in the mid-sixties Wales had gone backwards in terms of its .. its professional standing. And if I wanted to do anything, in terms of being Head of Programmes, I wanted to actually go back to Hywel Wil.. Davis's vision, if you like. And .. and .. because I didn't think that .. I never have thought that producing programmes for the home patch for .. is .. is enough. I think you have to be there to .. not only reflect Wales to itself but to reflect it to a wider audience and be a centre of excellence alongside all the other centres of excellence, broadcasting excellence, in .. wherever they are. And I took it upon myself to .. to try and resuscitate the .. the Hywel Davis vision in my years as Head of Programmes.

GILLARD Mm. By now, of course, you were back handling radio as well as television now. But FM had come hadn't it? VHF Radio and that .. you might tell us how you solved the .. the problem of .. of .. of .. of current affairs

and .. and daily news and that sort of thing, in Wales, by using one channel for English and another for .. for Welsh.

JONES Yes. FM was there and so we had an extra channel. And of course by that time the lingris.. the linguistic problem which was easier, in my younger days, by the time I was in .. had become Head of Programmes, the linguistic divide was .. was becoming quite horrendous. And the cry for .. the deprivation on both sides and the aggravation between the two halves of the community. And so we were all wondering what to do about this. And the only answer to it .. that problem, obviously at the end of the day, is to split it. And we had FM available to us. And so we began splitting. But of course the question then; what would go .. which one would go. FM was immensely unpopular as it has been for many years. Although it .. we all knew that at the end of the day, FM would .. would be the .. the frequency to use. But what was .. how would you persuade the Welsh nation of that? And we did, we took the bull by the horns and .. and said that .. But in the belief, actually, that the Welsh language audience was, in hard professional terms, was more dedicated to listening to a service in .. in its own language than was the English language audience. And they were more likely to .. to switch if they .. they were more likely to switch to an unpopular frequency than was the English audience. That was the brutal fact of life. And we took that bull by the horns. And so, we started splitting within the morning shows, GOOD MORNING WALES, and BOR DA and all that. And then out of that of course came the

major split,in my time as Head of Programmes, of the creation of Radio Wales on Medium Wave and Radio Cymru on FM - two complete services - alongside Radio Ulster, Radio Scotland, in other places.

GILLARD Yes. And also in your time you saw, what you were foreshadowing earlier, the .. the building of television studios at Llandaff. That's right. And .. and that had to happen because as part of this, if you like, regeneration process, we had to be seen to be professional. We had to have professional equipment and so, the big television studio and then the smaller ce.. of television studio was built in Llandaff. No the other way round, I'm sorry, in those years. In .. in the .. what was it - the mid-seventies ..

GILLARD Yes.

JONES .. and .. and then we were back on course. And able, once again, although the .. and the last programme to be pr.. the last major programme to be produced in the chapel, actually, was LLOYD GEORGE. One of .. one of, may say, one .. I suppose, one of my major achievements was actually getting LLOYD GEORGE produced - which was a major series. A very, very expensive series. And we had to make it - I think the last episode was made in .. in the new television studio but the rest was .. was made - they were made in the chapel in .. in Broadway. But we were then back on course as a professional service.

GILLARD I'm worried about the .. the orchestra. I remember it from the days when it was the National Orchestra of Wales which then went out of existence. But the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra was built up enormously in your time wasn't it?

JONES Yes. There .. there had been a .. a terrible crisis in .. when John Rowley was .. was controller. That .. when it that? That .. that's late ..

GILLARD Oh.

JONES .. early seventies.

GILLARD It started in se.. in the beginning of seventies.

JONES Yes. There was one of the .. one of the pre-audit BBC crisis with its orchestras. And there was a terrible crisis and it was John Rowley, actually, who .. who, I think, devised the way forward. Put it to the Arts Council that if this orchestra was to survive it could only survive on a .. on a Welsh national basis. And it was he who devised a formula that the Arts Council would put some money into it. And in those days, therefore, it .. it crept up from forty-four .. forty-four players, which was not a decent orchestra in anybody's terms, to an orchestra, kind of a concert orchestra,

which could appear in public. Then in my day I extended that, because there was another crisis in my day, as to whether this orchestra would continue alongside some of the other regional orchestras. And I fought it on the basis that this was no.. not just a concert orchestra, in Wales, but should be the .. the National Symphony Orchestra for Wales. And in that time we then put it up to about seventy odd players. It's now gone up to nineteen on the same basis.

GILLARD Where does the money come from then?

JONES Well a third of the money ca.. came .. comes from the Arts Council. They're .. what they're doing, actually, is paying for a national concert orch.. national symphony orchestra in Wales. So a third comes from .. from the Arts Council. Subsequently, now this organisation, S4C, puts money in as well on the .. on the basis that it .. it actually produces programmes for this .. this service called, S4C. So it is .. it .. is now seen as a .. as a national orchestra for Wales.

GILLARD And it has high repute of course. Now you became Controller in 1981. Was that fulfilment of a great ambition?

JONES No. I never had an ambition (LAUGHS) to be Controller. Always looked at .. at Alun Oldfield in too much awe to ever begin to believe that I would

be Controller. But these things happen don't they?

GILLARD Mm.

JONES And I .. I .. and what happened then was that S4C had been created. And the then Controller, Owen Edwards, moved out of the BBC to become director of .. of S4C. And I was, genuinely, actually persuaded .. persuaded or not, you know, I didn't really want the job 'cos I wanted to continue in the programme field. I didn't know but .. but I didn't really want to become Controller. But the laws of inevitability, I suppose. I did become.

GILLARD Well, there's also the thing that if you don't take it who does? And then you might be even more unhappy.

JONES That is really the real reason I suppose.

GILLARD What was the standing of the BBC in Wales then when you took over? Was it high?

JONES Well it was high. I think that .. no I don't think it was, to be honest. I think it was high as it always has been in terms of what I call the 'Welsh Establishment' but .. and that was all right in the early days because that .. they .. they were .. they .. they .. they were

very meaningful in terms of .. of .. of .. of the audience and the people of Wales generally. But I felt that BBC Wales didn't actually relate to the people of Wales, particularly to those who didn't speak Welsh. The .. the Welsh part of the community had been served rather well by that day .. by that time, by the early eighties and with the creation of S4C what more could you do? But I really felt that it didn't .. it had been criticised over the years, criticised for being nationalist, we'd all be criticised all the time for being members of Plaid Cymru. We'd actually appeared before Standing Committees on this and that and .. and Labour .. Labour Members of Parliament, like Leo Abse, had regularly criticised us for being nationalist. There's always been that problem in broadcasting in Wales. That if you are .. if you are seen to be supporting the language and its culture then you are always, inevitably, accused of being .. of being nationalist ..

GILLARD Mm.

JONES .. which has never been true, of course, for a great many of us. But we've always had that tag and we've had to fi.. fight against it. No, I wanted to open up BBC Wales and .. and I suppose spelt (SIC) a .. spent a great deal of energy on public relations which is actually why I went to London which is another stage ..

GILLARD Mm.

JONES .. And .. and if I had any success as Head of Programmes it was bringing back to Wales to the network fold and I think if I had any success as a Controller, apart from the normal managerial ones, which one hopes one did to one's best ability, it was in projecting it in a .. in a new .. a new PR. I mean I .. I really went out .. I mean the .. the things that are normal in PR, from receptions to boxes here and there to .. to being everywhere. To projecting BBC Wales as a .. as a more friendly institution and all that.

GILLARD And how did you deal with your Broadcasting Council? I mean were you at .. at ease with them?

JONES I was at ease. I was very lucky, very lucky throughout. When I was Head of Programmes there was Glyn Tegai Hughes who was a very fine member of .. Chairman - and a very fine governor, in difficult times in BBC. And he was succeeded by Alwyn Roberts and we got on. We .. we had been students together which was .. which was .. could have been difficult actually because, actually, the more friendly you are with .. with someone, actually it makes it more difficult at the end of the day. But we .. we struck a balance and .. and we got on very well and, I think, achieved a great deal in those. Because it .. there was also .. they were .. they were difficult, I mean, we were setting up a new relationship with S4C at that time, a new authority, and we were .. for the first time ever you had this channel called S4C which was a partnership between the ITV company, in Wales, HTV

and the BBC and independent producers and so ..

GILLARD Yes.

JONES .. we had to forge a partnership. We also had, in order to provide about ten hours a week, in the Welsh language, from BBC Wales, which was another expansion. An expansion of about two hours a week. We to.. we had to take on several hundred staff. And in that time, in my day I think BBC Wales got to its largest population ever. We were up to about sixteen hundred people in those days. Now been reduced of course for other reasons ..

GILLARD Yeah. I'm going to ask you, now, I think, to tell the whole story of how S4C came into existence. And .. and I'm going to ask you to do it without interruption from me because I really don't know the detail as you do. And it .. it's all .. it goes back a bit and we've covered some of the earlier information haven't we?

JONES Mm.

GILLARD But it's .. it's .. it's the .. a.. about the .. the ac.. actual concept of it and how you got it accepted by Government.

JONES Yeah. Well it goes back, of course, to aspiration and frustration. And it goes back to, as we were

saying earlier, the more .. the more Welsh language programmes that .. that BBC was producing and by that time, I'm going back to the mid-sixties, therefore, the creation of BBC Wales. And alongside that, we can't forget this, the ITV company was also making an .. not as many but was making about five or six hours a week. So the Welsh language population was getting a fair share and realising that actually the .. a dr.. the dream of a service in the Welsh language was one that could .. they could .. actually be fulfilled. But, it wasn't as simple as that because the more you .. the more Welsh language programmes you produced, it's always a question of air time. Where do you put them? And whom do you deprive next? And there was no .. nowhere to go. There was no other .. other channel to go. But, throughout this period, throughout the late seventies, early eighties it became, now, a political force. The .. the whole frustration of the nation was poured on .. on broadcasting. The linguistic frustrations of the nation, the .. the concern about the future of the language, on the one hand, the frustration of those who didn't speak it on the other, the jealousies on both sides. They manifested themselves in terms of .. of the problems of broadcasting. And to be a Head of Programmes in BBC Wales or a Controller, BBC Wales, in those days, or any ITV - for the same reason, was a horrendous task. Because we were having to carve out of a BBC 1 Schedule or an ITV 1 Schedule, seven or eight hours and then, subsequently, more hours every week, in the Welsh language. And every time you opted out .. I .. I made the fatal mistake of opting out of DALLAS to show a Welsh Language

broadcast, the first episode of DALLAS 'cos I didn't know what it was, to .. to show a Welsh language programme and I thought our switchboard was gonna go up .. up in flames that night. That was constant problem. So, what was the solution? Well, we were struggling. There were people like distinguished people in the Welsh Society like Professor Jack Williams who was Professor of Education in .. Aberystwyth. And Elwyn D. Rees, another colleague in Aberystwyth, who were vociferous in terms of .. of the need for the continuance of bilinguality. That is: that you could .. that the two languages could survive on one channel, or two channels or three channels. But that you wouldn't separate them out. They were afraid of the ghetto problem. And we were all afraid of that, to be honest, because we've all be.. been brought up in a .. in a bilingual society. We're all, I hope, as proud of our Englishness as we are our Welshness, in terms of .. of language. But my experience was that it didn't work. It didn't work in terms of a schedule or in terms of pleasing people. You ended up by .. by frustrating everyone and your audience was actually doing down and down and down. So, that was the broadcasting side. Then on the political side, the Welsh Language Society had been following Saunders Lewis, who was the father of .. of it all, I suppose in this sense, the father of activist Wales. And, strangely enough, he .. he .. the BBC in Wales has an annual lecture. One year in Welsh, one year in English. And some time in the sixties, late sixties I think, he had .. he had .. he was the lecturer for that year and he'd given the youth of Wales a blueprint for .. for

action. He had said that the days of talking were over and they .. they had to take action if they were going to save the Welsh language. And that fired them off. And the Welsh Language Society was created and they took it upon themselves to fight for a Welsh Language service in television. And you had, growing throughout the seventies, you had this movement and it affected staff and broadcasting as much as in society. You had members in .. on the staff who .. we had to deal with quite carefully. And so there were tensions in the building, there were tensions outside. On top of that there was the whole investiture which .. which heightened the tensions in Welsh society. The Investiture of Prince of Wales, in Caernarvon, which .. which was a terrible time for all of us. Because now you had .. you had Welsh Language activists being equated with terrorists. Because you had the bombs going off, you had the Free Wales Army. And the poor MI5, or whatever they were, didn't know the difference between any one .. any one of them. And we were all being questioned. We were all on lists of .. of .. of potential activist terrorist lists. So, it was a fairly horrendous scene. Now, we all knew that somewhere on the horizon there was an extra channel - called Channel 4. And some of us thought that maybe that would be the answer, because the answer to this problem, actually, that which would take the cork out of the bottle, was actually an extra channel. But we had to persuade Government, who were trying to allocate that channel, that this was a solution and initially we failed. The Tory Government - William Whitelaw was Home Secretary. And to cut a very long story short, in

spite of all the protesting, in spite of .. of the debates, but maybe because Welsh society, as a whole, was so afraid of the ghetto mentality, and most of those in the profession actually thought that .. that putting all Welsh Language programmes on one channel, would be the end of .. of the Welsh Language not the beginning of a new .. of .. of a new era of it. Because there was division among those .. those of us who should have been united, I think that we, together, failed to persuade initially, persuade the Government to give the fourth channel to a .. a Welsh Language service. And so William Whitelaw made that famous speech to the RTS, in .. in Cambridge, where he declared that the Welsh .. the solution to the Welsh language, actually should be spread .. there should be an increase in programmes but that it should be spread across the channels.

BBC ORAL HISTORY

GERAINT STANLEY JONES

SIDE 3

JONES Wales seemed to have failed .. to persuade the Government that the solution to the Welsh language problem on .. in television was .. was to put it on Channel 4. And William Whitelaw, in this famous speech in .. in .. in Cambridge, of course, declared that .. that the solution was to spread .. there .. should be more Welsh language programmes, that they should be spread across the four channels, with a preponderance of them being, maybe, on BBC 2. But the solution lay within the broadcasters' own .. own .. control. Of course, once he said this all hell let .. was let loose here in Wales. I mean, if things had been bad before, then they were ten times worse because the activists felt that there'd been a massive betrayal of Welsh aspiration and a concern for the language. And it was .. it was the late '70s, which was .. must have been '79 this, I think. Um .. and so .. and it was a time of mass unemployment. It was a time when .. when the heavy industries in Wales were facing their most difficult period, when steel closures were rampant, when the mines were closing, dozens every year. And so you had an unemployment problem on a very large scale. And the potential for civil disorder and .. and unrest was .. was .. was very high indeed. Out of all this came

Gwynfor Evans, who was President of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist party. And he declared that he would fast until death unless Wales was given its own Welsh television channel. Well, Gwynfor Evans became .. gave Wales .. gave disconcerted Wales what it needed, obviously, which was leadership. Not only those who were sympathetic to the Welsh language cause but those who were unsympathetic towards Government and everything else. And I remember being at a public meeting in the Brangwyn (ph) Hall in Swansea, which holds about two or three thousand people, and I .. and Gwynfor Evans was there .. was the main speaker there. It was called to discuss the future of the television. But most of the people were nothing to do with the Welsh language or cultural inheritance. They were dis .. disaffected and out of work. And I think that the Home Office began to realise that they had a potential Northern Ireland on their hands, if they weren't very, very careful. Certainly, the Welsh Office was terribly concerned about it all. And I got involved with .. with meetings with Nick Edwards, the Secretary of State at that time .. who was expressing a real, real concern about Wales and its future and .. in terms of more about law and order, a real concern that Gwynfor Evans actually should be taken very seriously. And politicians of all shades had a .. a personal respect for Gwynfor and .. he's a man of great principle and they knew that. And .. but Nick Edwards and my .. my .. some .. I have a great deal of admiration for Nick Edwards. I think in historic terms he will go down as having achieved much for .. for Wales, even though his personality is .. is a difficult one. But I got to know him quite well over

that period and .. and I found it .. his sin .. sincerity in terms of Gwynfor Evans as a person and in terms of that which .. which he was striving for was .. was .. was huge. Anyway, I think mainly through Welsh Office influence a reversal was about to be .. about to be .. a reversal of the policy was .. was on hand. The public .. they got it .. the public way through all this, of course, was the three wise men that they .. it was arranged that Cledwyn Hughes, Lord Cledwyn, and Sir Goronwy Daniel, who had been Permanent Secretary in .. in the Welsh Office, was then Principal of University College Aberystwyth, and the Archbishop of Wales, Joe Williams then, would visit Willie Whitelaw. A very public visit .. filmed on the way in and filmed on the way out. And out of that would come some kind of reversal. I think this was fairly well stage managed. I think the decision had been taken to reverse the policy before the visit of the wise men. But that they were the actors on stage, as it were. And so the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, decided that he had taken a wrong decision. And Nick Edwards was put up front to face the world to tell them so. Willie didn't appear. Willie .. Willie Whitelaw did not appear to .. to admit that there was a U turn. Nick Edwards was .. was allowed .. (LAUGHING) .. to face that. But that happened and so we had the creation of S4C, which is the Welsh version of Channel 4. So, when Channel 4 came on the air in .. in the rest of the United Kingdom, here in Wales, you had a separate authority, separate Channel, with .. and the Act of Parliament, that particular Broadcasting Act, dec .. '82 Broadcasting Act says that .. that there had to be a minimum, I think, of twenty

five hours of broadcasting, most of which should be at prime time, in the Welsh language. And for the rest of the time that S4C has to show .. the programmes of Channel 4. So the problem was resolved. Um .. and I have to say .. strangely, because I .. I think .. the only part I had to play really, I suppose, was that .. the BBC was in some difficulty over all this because it was taking .. the BBC .. Michael Swann was .. was the Chairman at the time. And the Gover .. Governors were .. were very .. taking a very responsible view of all this. And actually .. listening to the Broadcasting Council for Wales. They .. they .. the Governors had taken the view that this was a matter for Wales to advise them in terms of their decisions. And they were taking advice from them. The problem was, of course, that there was division of opinion in Wales as to .. as to the solution. Most people involved in broadcasting were .. did not favour the .. the Channel 4 solution, for the reasons I explained: they were afraid of the ghetto and that this was not the way that the future of the language could be preserved. I was actually one of the very few who .. only because I think I .. I'd been faced with the problems of scheduling. And, after the Willie Whitelaw speech in Cambridge and after the public rumpus, Alwyn Roberts, who was our Chairman then .. (CLEARS THROAT) .. was going to his Governors meeting in London .. and they were asking him, 'Now, what is the Welsh view therefore?. If .. has Willie Whitelaw got it wrong or not?' And he asked me for a paper - I was Head of Programmes then. He asked me the question 'Will the Willie Whitelaw solution work in hard professional terms? Can you actually spread Welsh language across the Channels, primarily on

BBC 2, to the satisfaction of the broadcast .. broadcasters and the community?' And I wrote a paper proving, from a professional scheduling point of view, that it was not possible. And I think that, therefore, that .. that .. that the governing body then took a decision that this was not feasible from a broadcaster's point of view. That's the only real hand I had in .. in all of that.

GILLARD Interesting.

JONES Um .. but it's strange now, actually, that I find myself being one of the few people who .. who actually wanted .. wanted to create this organisation called S4C. I now find myself running it .. which is interesting.

GILLARD I'd like you to tell us just how it is run. I mean, where do you draw your .. do you make programmes?

JONES No, we don't make any programmes. We're like Channel 4. Channel 4 is a commissioning body. We have 'a' .. first of all we have an authority which is .. and now, with a new Broadcasting Act coming .. which has just come into force, this authority is even more independent. When it was created, it had an umbrella over it called the IBA. Because it got its money through the IBA from a levy from the ITV companies. We .. that's no longer true. The ITC now is separate. We get our money .. in a different way. It's the

same money, actually, but when .. while all these companies are now bidding for the franchise they will .. expected to put, as part of their bid, a .. a sum of money which goes towards S4C and Gaelic programming in Scotland and various other things. But that money comes to us from the Treasury, through the Home Office. So we are now one of the three broadcasting authorities, actually - BBC, the ITC and ourselves. But as .. as a body, as an organisation, we're very like Channel 4. We're only a commission .. and a hundred odd staff. We don't make any programmes ourselves. We commission from .. from other people. We get ten hours a week and now, with the new Broadcasting Act, those ten hours are .. are statutory. They're in .. they're in .. in the Act of Parliament. The BBC has to provide ten hours, free of charge, from the licence and the rest, which amounts to twenty five, thirty hours a week, we pay for .. we commission from the ITV contractor, although there's no obligation. We get from wherever we can get them .. value for money. Most of them come from independent producers based across Wales. So it's .. it's .. it's an independent body and .. and .. and, as I say, we don't make any programmes ourselves.

GILLARD And, when you're carrying Channel 4, do you also carry advertising?

JONES We carry advertising. We carry .. we carry Channel 4 advertising, although .. well, it's actually ITV advertising in the Welsh region. At the moment, that's .. that's through .. the ITV contractor with Channel 3 but from '93

onwards we will be .. we will be actually responsible for our own advertising. In that case, we have to create our own sales force or get somebody else to do it for us because, as part of the financial plan, we get .. in present figures we get about fifty .. fifty odd million from the Treasury and we have to make about three or four, five million from advertising.

GILLARD Now, you said that you draw a certain number of hours a week from the BBC. Do you have any say over what the content of those hours will be?

JONES No. Um .. it .. in terms of .. of .. we .. it's a very curious position and .. and S4C was .. when S4C was created, I mean, it was such a hybrid that only by reasonableness and .. and friendship and belief in .. that this had to work did it work. Cos you had the curious position, the BBC actually .. BBCs programmes having to appear on an ITV Channel - which I'll come back to - which created for me as Controller, BBC Wales, huge problems in terms of the BBCs unions. Er .. and who was in actually .. and then you had the publisher, which was S4C, having no control over .. the editorial control over the ten hours of programmes which were produced under the BBCs charter. And that still .. is still there. And we .. we have a letter of intent between us which actually is a gentleman's agreement. Formally, I have no real control over the BBCs material. Informally, I do because we're decent people and we talk a lot. But it could only happen in Wales, probably.

GILLARD But you have to coordinate it with all the rest of the material you're using. You couldn't have the BBC covering the same topics, doing documentaries on the same subject and that sort thing.

JONES That .. that's .. that's been worked out quite cleverly in .. in that BBC does all our news for us. So there's no .. there's no com .. there's no problem there. ITV does current affairs up until recently .. ITVs been doing all our current affairs for us. So there's no problem there. We now .. BBC will be moving into current affairs but we now have a .. have an editor here who will, by mutual agreement, will .. will control all that. But it's done in .. in .. in .. it's .. it's .. it's an unwritten constitution between us really.

GILLARD It's a fascinating story and you've told it for us very well indeed. We move on. We've got .. oh, about half a tape left. A quarter of an hour. You mov .. you went to London in 1986 to be Director of Public Affairs. What did that post involve?

JONES Well, that was about the BBCs image. And the only .. the only background I had for that, of course, was .. was Alasdair Milne was Director General at the time and I was Controller Wales, and was . .had .. was in that post for four or five years and I was relatively young. Relatively young. And there was always a problem 'What are you going to do

next, Jones?' And .. I had no inclination to go to London at all. But I had built up a reputation in Wales .. there were two things. As I said earlier, I had gone in a big way in terms of the image of BBC Wales, in terms of a difficult situation in the Welsh community and public relations. And probably done quite well at it. And Alasdair recognised that. And the other thing .. was, well, my life long passion for regional broadcasting and the belief in it in terms of its importance to the BBC. And that remains with me. I've always believed that .. that the licence .. that .. that the licence paying public .. were owed more in terms of grass roots broadcasting than .. the BBC had ever, ever given them. And I believe that, in terms of the organisation of the BBC, it should be far more devolved than it ever has been. And I had .. and I thought, in my own way, that .. that crucial to all this was the way that regional broadcasting in England was organised - or not organised. Alasdair knew of .. of that and we talked at length about it. (CLEARS THROAT) And I told Alasdair the only real thing I would like to do outside Wales is .. is .. is to reorganise broadcasting in England some day, as a project - not as a job but as a project. Um .. so then be .. then sometime, Alasdair was running into troubles with .. with .. with his Board of Governors in 19 .. and in .. 1985 things were at their worst. And, if I can tell this rather personal story, Mike Checkland, who was Director Resources in Television at the time, was on the Board of Management and very concerned about the future of the BBC and he and I were .. reminiscing and talking after a rugby match in Cardiff on a Saturday evening. And I remember it very

well because it was crucial to my whole life afterwards. And Wales had won and England had lost and he was miserable and I was .. mellow. But we were talking about the problems facing Alasdair Milne and .. we both ca - because we both knew him very well - had come to the conclusion that his problem was that he had no real vision and, therefore, no strategy for his time as Director General. That Alasdair's vision of the BBC was an inheritance. All he had to do was to actually manage the inheritance and .. but we were in Margaret Thatcher age and life was different. And we all knew that there had to be changes. Um .. we concocted - and I frankly say over a large whisky or whatever it was - we said that what he needs is .. is a vision. And .. since he can't produce it himself what he needs is a few people to gather round him and produce a vision and a strategy and a policy. And we said what he needs is a few .. a few of us. And we actually named the people that .. who maybe could do it. And they were: Mike .. Mike, himself, and me, from a regional point of view, and David Hatch, who was of our age and our thought processes from .. from manage .. Radio, and a good old stalwart to finance, Geoff Buck, who was Deputy of Finance at the time. We thought that maybe .. being arrogant youngsters we thought that maybe we could be of some assistance. Da .. Mike's job was to go to Board of Management on the following Monday morning and suggest to Alasdair that what he needed was a group of people to produce a strategy. On Monday afternoon, I got a call from Alasdair at three o'clock. 'I've had this wonderful idea, boy. I've decided to call a group .. and call it PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE and I want you to be one

of it.' And that was crucial to me and .. and to .. to Mike and to David Hatch, of course. For that summer - whatever it was, June - we were given eight weeks or something to produce a .. a document called PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE. And we roamed the BBC and went into .. we did, we .. we gave up our jobs for eight weeks. We locked ourselves in, in a little room in The Langham. And then went to Birmingham and .. all over the BBC and .. and produced a document which ranged from engineering services to regions to public affairs to the whole thing.

GILLARD Was this 'black spot'?

JONES This was 'black spot'. We still have the ties to remind us of it. Er .. we were named 'the black spot' because we .. we were obviously .. people were .. were quite terrified of the appearance of this small group of people .. across the land. But we produced a document which then went through the Board of Management, with some difficulty because - some great difficulty. And then Board of .. Board of Governors and we .. I .. I attended .. a Board of Governors away weekend somewhere .. in that autumn when it was discussed. And it was a very tearful experience for many people. I remember the Director of .. Engineering being very close to tears because 'black spot' meant that Engineering Division were losing much of its previous responsibility, particularly in terms of research and .. and design and all that. And there was .. a decision to cut down on the engineering base of the BBC. And there were other areas, not least then, of course, because part of it was

.. part of the 'black spot' PRIORITIES FUTURE PLAN was that .. that .. broadcasting in the regions should be reorganised and that England should be reorganised into .. into a number of regions. But the fundamental dec .. decision was that Local Radio should leave the .. the .. the Radio Directorate and become part of .. of Regional Broadcasting. Now that produced great traumas and when I .. out of all this I then became Director of Public Affairs, at the same time that Mike Checkland .. or a little after Mike Checkland become Dir .. Deputy Director General. And Alasdair Milne didn't like that either. Um .. but he .. so in January 1986, I think it was, I .. I went to Board of Management .. at my first meeting, against that background, Dick Francis, who was Managing Director Radio, and Bryce McCrirrick, who was Director of Engineering, were both threatening to resign in that first meeting. And Alasdair told me afterwards, 'It's not always like this, boy'. But it was because the .. the difficulties on Board of Management got worse. My task was twofold: it was as a PR to try and spearhead a new PR initiative, public relations initiative for the BBC on the one hand; and to set in motion the reorganisation of broadcas .. regional broadcasting which had been agreed by them through the various boards. So I had two major tasks. One I was fairly well equipped for - the regional thing I thought. The other one I wasn't really. And .. because the BBCs problem was it as being attacked by Government, by Margaret Thatcher and Tebbit especially and the right wing MPs. And they were .. they were .. they were able to attack us on the many mistakes, managerial mistakes, which .. which .. which were

rampant in those days, it seems to me, which had begun with REAL LIVES and had gone on to the various cases .. libel cases, PANORAMA the rest. Um .. and there was a public problem of .. of the programmes. BBCs programmes were very popular but the institution was not popular. This has always been a problem in .. in the BBC seems to me. But they were particularly highlighted there. And we were in the age of PR and Stuart Young, who was Chairman, who I liked very much and we got on very well, and he had been part of .. entirely part of getting me to London with Alasdair. So it wasn't just an Alasdair thing. It was Chairman and DG. So I had his support. Worth saying because he was part of that world outside which used PR companies. He said 'What we need is an image maker' and so I got myself Lowe Howard-Spink's and Tim Bell. I thought I'd go as close as I could to Margaret Thatcher and got her own adviser on board. And Tim Bell. And out of Tim Bell, conversations with Tim Bell, we created what is now the annual .. affair of .. of .. of SEE FOR YOURSELF, where the BBC .. has an annual report to its shareholders. We did various things. We did .. we .. we did become .. we .. we utilised the PR methods of .. of industry. For the first time we were inviting people .. we were entertaining people in .. in .. in the boxes in the Albert Hall in the Proms. Nobody had ever made use of them before. On several occasions we were filling the place with .. with people from industry, from politicians, from the rest. Using entertainment methods. We were .. we were buying boxes at Ascot and the rest. We were going to places. We were be .. being more .. we were trying to meet more people. We were

having more public meetings. We were advertising on hoardings. We were advertising in the press. We were doing all these things because my consultant was Tim Bell in this. But we started all that and, on the other hand then, my other task was .. was to try to reorganise broadcasting in England. And .. and throughout that year, '86/'87 .. it took us about a year and a half to do that. And in the middle of all that, of course, Alasdair Milne was .. was fired.

GILLARD You were a witness then of the REAL LIVES episode, were you? Or was that before you went to London?

JONES No, the REAL LIVES episode was just before I went.

GILLARD Ah yes.

JONES I picked up the aftermath of it really.

GILLARD Yes.

JONES Because it was still rumbling around.

GILLARD Yes.

JONES And you had Lucy Faulkner, who was .. who was .. no, she wasn't Governor when I was there. Yes, she

.. No ...

JONES No, she would have gone. She .. she left .. she left ..

JONES .. she ......

GILLARD .. at REAL LIVES time.

JONES That's right.

GILLARD I mean, she was out of office, in fact.

JONES That's right.

GILLARD And came over especially.

JONES That's right.

GILLARD Um .. what was the role of - just briefly - of .. the other members of the Board of Management at your .. at your .. in your period? I mean, particularly with relation to the inadequacies of Alasdair Milne. I'm thinking of Bill Cotton and .. and Brian Wenham and such people.

JONES The problem is, of course, they were all in the wrong jobs, you know. I mean, I think one .. one ..

one of Alasdair's failures .. I was the first person, I think, that he had appointed directly to a job he wanted me to undertake. Because he'd got Aubrey in .. Aubrey Singer in the wrong job in Television, whereas he should have been in .. in .. no, he was in Radio and he should have been in Television. And then when he put him to Television it didn't work. Er .. Bill Cotton was, if I remember rightly, Managing Director .. Satellite Broadcasting at that time, which was a job .. (LAUGHING) .. he didn't particularly enjoy. And so it went on.

GILLARD Protheroe?

JONES Protheroe was deeply unhappy .. because he was the fall guy. And one of Alasdair's - and I .. I .. all this is against a background of having a great affection, admiration for Alasdair Milne. But he had weaknesses which .. which were .. had .. were becoming more and more apparent and one of the awful weaknesses he had was .. was to .. not to support you when the .. when the chips were down in terms of .. a problem with the Board of Governors. Now, I had this and Alan Protheroe had it more than any one of us, I suppose, in that he was expected .. Alan Protheroe's task was impossible. He was Dep .. Assistant Director General responsible for News and .. and Current Affairs without having any control over it. That is he didn't hold the money and they were not on his staff. He was expected to pick up the flak but he didn't have any real control. The control .. the real control lay with .. with the Head of Current Affairs in Radio and in .. and in Television.

And that wasn't altered until John Birt was brought in, of course. And John Birt was given that responsibility because of what had happened to Alan's time. But Alan was in an impossible position. He was asked to defend all these .. cos most of the problems, the managerial, editorial problems, were coming through the .. the .. somehow through the .. the current affairs chain. REAL LIVES, PANORAMA, the rest. That's where .. that's where the problem, the public problems were perceived to be. Because they were more exposed. And there was .. Li .. Lime Grove, which seemed to all of us to be slightly out of control. Er .. but Alan's position was that he was having to defend all this in public and .. and defend it to the Board of Governors. And, when the crunch came .. Alasdair never .. was never able .. there was always a point, I thi .. I .. I find in one's position as a manager, as a head of an establishment in .. when you are .. whether you're governing body or with anyone else that .. that you allow your senior staff to take .. to take responsibility up to a point. Then there comes a moment where you take over and say, 'OK, that's enough. I took the decision. It's my problem.' Alasdair was never able to do that. He always let it go and he remained silent until you actually hung yourself. And I found that to be a great weakness in him. But Alan .. Alan .. Alan's contribution to the BBC is .. is an enormous one. I mean, his dedication and energy ..

GILLARD Protheroe's ..

JONES Yes. Er .. Alan Protheroe's

dedication was .. was phenomenal. But he was in the wrong job and .. because it was an impossible task. Where am I now?

GILLARD Well, we .. in the middle of all this, Stuart Young dies ..

JONES In the middle .. that's right. In the middle of all this, Stuart Young dies and Stuart had been unwell since I had known him really. And was .. as I say, I was very fond of him and he had great strengths. He wasn't a good chairman of a board. Because I think a good chairman has to go in knowing what he wants at the end of the meeting. He has to actually drive his own decisions through. And Stuart was not able to do that. And he had .. and I think the fact that he had William Rees-Mogg alongside him .. cos I think he was afraid, intellectually afraid of William Rees-Mogg. Stuart Young was always .. was too aware of his .. of his intellectual, educational inadequacies. Er .. he needn't have been. But .. he was and he was made more .. more aware of them by .. by William Rees-Mogg's attitude because William Rees-Mogg has this intellectual arrogance which I find .. (LAUGHING) .. fearful. Or I did. I don't any more. But I did. And he had .. he had the way of actual .. of interrupting at the wrong moment. And .. and .. and making a chairman, such as Stuart Young, feel very .. very insecure. Particularly since he wasn't well. But Stuart .. Stuart died. And Joel Barnett took over in the interim and I think that Joel didn't think highly of Alasdair Milne - I feel. Um .. and Alasdair Milne didn't .. didn't

really realise it or was unable to do anything about it.

END OF SIDE 3

BBC ORAL HISTORY

GERAINT STANLEY JONES

SIDE 4

JONES And .. and .. Joel Barnett took over. Lord Barnett took over because .. he had been appointed by then Vice Chairman. Um .. and I found him, as Chairman .. because I suppose of his political experience, I found him much more effective as Chairman than .. than Stuart Young, in terms of a meeting and decision .. the decision taking processes and handling .. a bunch of articulate and highly intelligent, experienced people. Um .. but he clearly did .. had little regard for Alasdair Milne. And Alasdair didn't have .. was not able to reverse that, I .. I think. He didn't help himself. And, therefore, didn't help the rest of us. And there was one awful day and night, when Alasdair Milne was Chairman of the Commonthwell .. Commonwealth - what's it called? - Assoc ..

GILLARD Broadcasting.

JONES Broadcasting Association, which was meeting in Edinburgh. (CLEARS THROAT) And he was that year's Chairman .. President. And he desperately had wanted, looked forward to this, and wanted to be there. And I understand that because it was in his .. in his native country. Um .. but it

so happens that .. the week .. that week the BBC was facing yet another crisis, the crisis of PANORAMA and the .. and the .. and the libel case. And there was a governing body .. meeting of the Board of Governors on that Thursday. And it was to be discussed and there were decisions to be taken and a defence to be put to the Board of Governors. And we all knew that Alasdair would not be there and should be there because otherwise .. Alan Protheroe, yet again, would have to face this, without having the real facts or control over the situation. Um .. some of us decided to try to persuade Alasdair to come back and we had a plan and .. Patricia Hodgson, David Barlow, Bill Cotton and I had decided that, in turn, we would be in Edinburgh that day and try to persuade him to come back. And I was the last in the list. I hadn't intended going up but Bill was going to ring me in the afternoon, if .. if he thought that I .. I should go up. And he did. And I got up there and .. and was there for supper. And, after .. after supper and various social things with .. with the .. with the conference, in Alasdair's suite that night I decided I would have to try to get him on the .. on the .. on the .. on the early morning flight back. Um .. and Brian Wenham was there and I remember telling Brian 'I want you here. I want you to be witness to what's going to happen tonight.' And .. and .. in the meeting with David Barlow, Alasdair and Sheila Milne .. Pat Chalmers and his wife and .. and Wenham and myself - and at about one o'clock in the morning - I decided that I would have a real go at him. And I'm afraid I was very nasty and I think that Sheila was quite annoyed with me. Patrick Chalmers's wife was most surprised with the whole thing. And ..

no none else said very much but I told Alasdair that he was letting us all down if he wouldn't be there in the morning and that .. Oh well, I told him all the things that had been building up in his colleagues in Board of Management for some time, that .. that we felt that his own job was on the line unless .. unless he did appear. And .. he shouted me down but he did .. he did actually come back. But he travelled back with Joel Barnett that morning and he didn't .. he said hardly a word to him. Certainly not .. no more than social conversation. Didn't discuss the problem. He went to Board of Governors and sat there and didn't say a thing and let Alan Protheroe deal with the matter. Um .. and that, I think, was the end, actually. I .. so I think the end had been decided then and that all Duke Hussey did actually was to .. was to deliver the message.

GILLARD But the new Chairman had at that point arrived? Or not arrived?

JONES No. The new Chairman had not arrived. I think he'd probably been .. no, he hadn't arrived or been appointed. I can't remember. Then Hussey was appointed and I remember his first visit to .. he came to have .. drinks or lunch with the Board of Management in Television Centre. We all found it a bit strange and curious and were actually wondering to our own futures as well as to Alasdair's, obviously, because he had a reputation for being a .. a hard newspaper type tycoon. And he looked it and sounded like it,

although he was perfectly charming, you know, in .. in a superficial kind of way and very direct. So we all wondered what was going to happen. I certainly did because I didn't think that I would be at all be in the mould of .. of that kind of person. I was in Stuart Young's mould and I was in Alasdair's mould but I didn't think that my .. my time would be .. my time was coming I thought .. and I'd be back in Wales sooner than I thought. Um .. but Alasdair survived however many months because .. Duke handled him very carefully and .. and actually I thi .. I think genuinely allowed him to be seen to be running the place without interference. But there were .. and I can't recall the build up to it because I thought on the day that it happened it didn't seem to me .. that subject was not bothering me that day. We'd had a .. it was .. we were in the Television Centre and we'd had what I considered to be a fairly routine Board of Management. We all hated Board of Management. The trouble with Board of Management .. Board .. Board of Governors .. because the .. the practise ..

GILLARD (OVERLAPPING) ..... restart that 'And we all hated Board of .....

JONES We all hated the Board of Governors' meetings .. Board of Management that is. Real hatred. Because we were expected, once a fortnight, to queue up outside and wait all morning, waiting to be called. We were not part of it all. In fairness to .. to Duke Hussey, he changed that and made Board of Management part of the .. or the senior members of Board of

Management part of the whole process and you were there throughout the meeting and you felt part of the .. of the process. But, before then .. little wonder that there were tensions between the two Boards and they .. they were horrendous tensions. I mean, I .. I had come from Wales where I had a very good relationship with the Chairman, Alwyn Roberts, and a wonderful relationship with a very supportive, critical - but in the positive sense - er .. Broadcasting Council. I had thought that that's how people dealt with .. with matters of importance. And then I went to London and found that they were .. they were behaving like children, that they were .. that they were secretive, that the only person in the meeting, when I went there .. in the Governors meeting, throughout was Alasdair Milne and the Secretary. (CLEARS THROAT) And the rest of us were trotted in and out for our pieces and .. we were wasting time. We would go to Scotland .. for a Board of Governors meeting and appear for ten seconds to make a short report on something - as I often did as Director of Public Affairs. I had to report on Wisely (ph) Council meetings and all the rest of it. I was in and out like a yo-yo. And then queuing up outside. And then, when you were not there, you were wondering what they saying about you because they were .. there was an .. antagonism, a horrible feeling of antagonism. In fairness to Duke Hussey, the moment he got there he realised this and began changing that and he did bring the two Boards closer together. And it's one of his greatest achievements, I think, is that he's got .. he's .. he's actually .. you feel you're part of the governing body of the BBC. The Managing Directors were in throughout and .. and

the Deputy Director General. And so you were part of every discussion, as if you were part of the governing body. And that has resolved many of the problems. But it didn't resolve Alas .. So on that particular Thursday morning, it was a tough meeting, a normal meeting, and you felt there was antagonism to Alasdair but no more than usual. And, at the end of it, I went downstairs and, as Director of Public Affairs - as I was then - I had some responsibility at the end of it all of reporting to my press people was there anything that we should be wary of or .. I used to have a little meeting. Went downstairs .. to the sixth floor and was having my meeting, realising that Alasdair had vanished somewhere, although he came down with me, I remember. And then he vanished into another room. And .. I wandered in to .. I wandered in to .. to the dining room, where the governing body were having their drinks, and I met up with John Parry, who was attending his first meeting as National Governor for Wales, Alwyn Roberts having left. He looked red faced. He didn't know what to say to me. He was most embarrassed and I didn't understand why. I understand afterwards, of course. Because on his first meeting he'd been faced with the problem of sacking the Director General. We sat around and I got a feeling there was something wrong. I went .. and I went back and talked to .. to Ros .. Alasdair Milne's PA, secretary. And she was distressed by then and said 'He's gone home.' And so the story came out. And we .. I eventually .. cos I then thought I'd better gather my press people around and stand by. And I went back to the dining .. dining room .. where the rest were sitting round beginning their soup. And then came

the famous tinkling of the glass and Duke Hussey got up and said that Alasdair Milne had decided to retire from the BBC .. resign from the BBC - were the words, I think. Resign. And within minutes I got up and said I think my place now is not here but to deal with the .. the whole informational side of it. And I went out to .. began putting the pieces together and preparing a statement and all that. And Mike Checkland and I, within half an hour, decided we'd better go and see Alasdair. And we spent the next couple of hours .. cos Sheila .. the difficulty .. thing, we got to Alasdair's home and Sheila was not in. And Alasdair was distressed because Sheila .. he was afraid that .. she .. she was out shopping or something in the car and he was terrified that she would have heard about this on the radio. She came back while we were there and .. she hadn't heard. And then we left. But .. and then one of the first things that we prepared Alasdair for was get himself a good lawyer and all that. (BREATHES IN HEAVILY) But .. subsequently, Mike and I then tried to support Alasdair as best we could - with Michael Bunce, in fairness, who was Controller Information Services at the time. And .. because there .. there .. he was being hounded by the press and .. and that was quite a difficult time. Um .. and we got through the next few weeks in that way while we started preparing for the next round. I had to .. we were all deeply offended by all this, even though, as I've said I think, that we were .. we were all beginning to think that Alasdair was not going to make it to the end of his contract. But we were deeply offended by the way that .. the new Chairman had done it. Er .. and I felt I had to tell him that, that I couldn't go on

serving the new Chairman unless I told him what I thought. So I .. within a week or so I sought an interview with him. I went to see him and I told him that I didn't necessarily disagree with the decision but I didn't like at all the way he'd done it. Um .. I thought .. I told him that I thought there were more elegant ways of dealing with someone like that because .. because he'd left .. he'd left Alasdair without any dignity and he'd left his Board of Management without dignity, therefore. And had, therefore, left the BBC without dignity for a time. And one of the major tasks then was actually to regain that dignity somehow or other. Mike Checkland then, of course, was .. at the same time an announcement was made that Mike will hold the fort as .. acting until an appointment was made. And I happened to be even closer to Mike Checkland than I was to Alasdair. And tried to support him then for .. because we were very friendly and .. and .. we were .. we felt we were the only ones there really because he and I were near in terms of offices and the place, Broadcasting House, and . and because we'd gone through 'black spot' together and because actually 'black spot' (sic). So the next part of the story actually is that .. I was known for a while as being Mike Checkland's campaign manager and .. and .. what that means really is, I suppose .. because I had written the 'black spot' document .. I had written - I mean, it wasn't my document but I had written it. They were my words. Er .. and so .. and that became Mike Checkland's blueprint for becoming Director General. All I did really was to .. was to remind him of the words and go through the policy we worked out together for the BBC. And I spent many hours .. (LAUGHING?) ..

of course, rehearsing him for his interview. And all that and .. and I .. even though another good friend, Brian Wenham, was also in the race and .. David Hatch and I tried to persuade Wenham that he didn't .. wasn't really a runner .. a starter. But, since he decided he was, we tried to help him as well because, you know, he was a friend. And David Hatch and I were really .. believing that the only decision, given the .. the Thatcherite age we were in, given the need in those days for a different style of management BBC, given that money and econ .. economics were all important, given that you .. you need a new, clinical .. clinical .. attitude towards running the BBC and a .. and a declared strategy, that Mike Checkland was the only one actually that they could appoint; that they had to come to that conclusion at the end of the day. In spite of the David Dimbleby's and all the rest of it that, when the crunch came, they couldn't actually decide upon anybody else, that he .. and tha .. that proved to be so. Even though they did, of course, worry about the Current Affairs/News dimension, which is why the Dimbleby factor came in. And I .. and when they were in .. cos my room was next door to the Chairman's as .. as Director of Public Affairs .. (CLEARS THROAT) .. and it was the waiting room for the .. for the decisions. So we were waiting for the smoke to go up in my room that evening Wenham and Hatch and Checkland and myself. Er .. and about eight o'clock, I think, before the Governors decided who was to be Director General. And then .. Mike went in. And then he came back and said 'They want me to make a deal with .. about Dimbleby.' Er .. he came, after a period of time, he came back to my room and said 'I want a word

with you. They want me to deal ..' and I said 'No, don't.' And I said 'You must .. you must say "I'm Director General, I will decide who I want as my Deputy", don't make a deal.' And he went back and didn't make a deal. And .. but he had to .. I think within a day he had .. well .. quite soon he had to declare who he would take because, clearly, they were .. it was part of a package of .. some .. some kind of package that he had to have a .. Deputy who was going to be in charge of News/Current Affairs. Um .. and so, quite quickly, he had to decide who that was to be and took advice .. most of the advice came from Paul Fox, who was then in Yorkshire. And I didn't know Birt, only by reputation. I didn't know anything of him at all. (CLEARS THROAT) Um .. but was there actually in Checkland's office the evening when he rang Birt and got his reaction. So I was witness to that. Um .. and then, when Birt came along .. was starting in his new .. position, Mike, for some reason, wasn't there that particular Monday morning and asked me to welcome him, which I was glad to do. And I had this .. and I went downstairs and saw Birt come in .. came in .. come in and shook him by the hand and knew we'd made a mistake. A very curious feeling but it happens sometimes when you .. when you .. when you're vaguely involved in something and .. I .. I had a terrible feeling that we'd made a mistake. But .. that's another story. (BREATHES HEAVILY AND HALF LAUGHS)

GILLARD Fascinating ending, I must say. Yes. And soon after that you got the .. the S4C appointment.

JONES And soon after .. yes. Well, I .. then .. no. No, I mean, sorry I .. I stopped it there. Er .. of course, the logical .. the logical .. next step for me was .. to .. to run the regions then. We .. by that time the regions .. we .. I had org .. reorganised the regions in the way that 'black spot' had determined into eight .. eight big regions: five in England and .. and .. and the national regions. And once Mike had been appointed and was now creating his own management team he as .. then asked me to become .. because the logical next step was to create a Directorate ..

GILLARD Yes.

JONES .. having taken Local Radio out of .. and asked me to be Managing Director of Regional Broadcasting. The first ever. And it seemed to me to be .. to be the logical .. and into a career dedicated to regional broadcasting. And I . I enjoyed it enormously then. Just .. actually stabilising, putting together a Regional Directorate. Er .. and fighting all the battles that you will be familiar with, Frank, the centre against .. against .. I .. I mean I was .. I was a known devolutionary. Er .. and I .. I mean, at the end of the day .. (CLEARS THROAT) .. I was going to fight for .. a governing body which was more devolved in responsibility. I thought that the concept of National Regional Governors was a very good one and I always felt that England was .. had been denuded of .. of governors who were .. had .. who had had a responsibility. Um .. and I thought .. interestingly enough, William Rees-Mogg

floated this in his last meeting. But it was his last meeting and he didn't get very far.

GILLARD Mm.

JONES But I thought that some day I would .. I would try and pitch for that as well and, once I'd done that, I thought I would have managed to have changed somewhat the ethos of the BBC because, without that, you will not do it. I think ..

GILLARD Mm mm.

JONES .. that, unless you have a governing body which has the same kind of interest, respect and .. feeling for regional broadcasting, genuinely, then I don't think you will change this .. this over centralist .. centralist attitude of the BBC. And I stayed. I was there for two years. And I had intended staying .. another year or so. A year .. year or a year and a half, until I was fifty five, and then I was going to go quietly in the hope that Checkland would be able to appoint my successor before he went. Um .. but the incumbent Director of S4C from the beginning, Owen Edwards, was not well and .. was having to give up earlier than he thought he would and in December 1989 I had a private call from .. the Chairman of S4C saying that they had a problem and they had the Broadcasting Act looming large sometime that following year and no one really to - and Owen had decided to .. to go - no one really to take them

through what could be a difficult period. (CLEARS THROAT) And asking would I be interested in coming back. And I spent Christmas wondering about it. And I talked to Mike Checkland. He said 'You can't refuse, can you? Because you will never live with yourself afterwards if you don't.' And so I decided to come back. But I would stay .. I wanted to see one or two other things done. I decided I would not move until the summer. I regretted not staying another year or so because, having created a new Directorate, I wanted to bed it in and do certain things and having put together a team I felt I was letting them down in .. in leaving them at a crucial moment. And I was beginning to win battles in Board of Governors for the first time, you know. And .. and I regretted not having gone on for that. But I suppose my leaving was convenient in a way for the BBC because I think they were becoming a bit fearful of the .. of devolution again. And, as you will recall over the years, it comes in cycles, doesn't it?

GILLARD Mm.

JONES And I think my .. what happened in the regions was .. was .. could only .. with me there, could only go from strength to strength politically. And I think they saw my going as an opportunity to bring it back slightly. Er .. and so they didn't appoint anyone who was in my mould cos .. had they appointed someone who was one of my children, if you like. It would have gone ..

GILLARD Yeah.

JONES .. politically stronger. But they didn't do that ..

GILLARD Mm.

JONES ,. and I don't criticise them for that. I simply .. I think it's a fact of life that they took an opportunity to .. just to bring it back slightly. Er .. but .. the .. broadcasting now has a Regional Directorate. And whether it .. when I say .. I think .. I think it's a better way of .. of running England, especially, because I think that England was, in broadcasting .. organisational terms, a bit of a mess before then. And no none knows more about that than Frank Gillard. (LAUGHS)

GILLARD Well, I think there we must end it. Fascinating history you've given us this morning. Thank you very much, indeed. I must say I'm delighted that you've been able to tell this story.

END OF SIDE 4