The Connected Histories of the BBC	
Provenance:	The file reproduced here was provided by the BBC to be made publicly accessible through the Connected Histories of the BBC catalogue hosted by the University of Sussex. It was selected in 2021 from one of five collections: • BBC Oral History • BBC History of North Regional Broadcasting • BBC Horizon at 50 • BBC World Service Moving Houses Project • Alexandra Palace Television Society Oral History
Clearance:	Interviews have been reviewed and edited to comply with GDPR and other requirements.
Copyright:	© BBC © Alexandra Palace Television Society
Conditions of use:	This interview is available for private research. If you wish to use any of the interview in a published work or for a commercial purpose, permission must be requested from the BBC at historyteam@bbc.co.uk apts@apts.org.uk (for Alexandra Palace material)
Partner:	The Connected Histories of the BBC research project was led by the University of Sussex, 2017-2022, funded by the AHRC.
More information:	The project's public resource including more information on terms and conditions of use are available at: https://chbbc.sussex.ac.uk/

File: **LR002590 - KENNETH WOLSTENHOLME**

Duration: **1:43:11**

Typist: **694**

START AUDIO

Kenneth: I always say that it wouldn't worry me if I won the Lottery. I know what I'd do if someone handed me £20m or something. It would be very nice. As I say, what I would do is, I'd plan a trip around the world. Some of it, I'd do by air, some by sea.

[Break in audio]

0:00:21

Interviewer: The very beginnings. What sort of family are you from? How big was your family?

Kenneth: It was a very big family. There was a child who was born, but died before I was born. Then, when I came into the world, I had 2 brothers, both older than me, of course, and a sister, who was the eldest. Then there was another sister who arrived on the scene. She was younger than me. Good, clean living tells: I'm the only survivor in the whole family. That was it.

0:01:05

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Kenneth: In Worsley, in Lancashire. Worsley is about 3 miles from the centre of Manchester. A little dreamy place, but now, a very posh place, because a lot of the rich footballers live there. It spread. These boroughs that create themselves- If you come off the M6, going north, you suddenly find yourself in Manchester, and you're about 30-odd miles from Manchester. But that's life these days, isn't it? All these big cities, they wanted to be cities, first of all, and now, they want to be big boroughs. It's incredible.

0:01:51

Interviewer: So it was a large family, near Manchester. Do you have an earliest memory? Is there something that sometimes flashes into your mind, and you think to yourself-

Kenneth: Yes, because when I was 18 months old, I had terrible stomach pains, and they called the doctor. I was rushed to hospital and had my appendix taken out. I can remember being in the ambulance. I said, "Don't go over the bumps. It hurts." The strange thing was, when I was getting better, some aunt, or somebody like that, bought me a toy crocodile. You'd wind it up, and then it's on the tray on your bed, and you'd let it go, and it's jaws were going up and down. I've loathed crocodiles all my life. I think they're the most reprehensive animals, or whatever they are.

I remember going to a luncheon, some years ago now, and David Attenborough was there. He was saying, "If we allow this shooting of the crocodiles, by the poachers, so that they can get these handbags and shoes, there won't be any crocodiles left." I sat down at the table, took a swig of my drink,

and said, "Hooray," because I think they're terrible looking things, aren't they?

Interviewer: Probably takes you back to bad memories, [that's all 0:03:35].

Kenneth: That's right. It has stuck with me ever since, this toy. Dear me.

0:03:43

Interviewer: Do you remember starting school?

Kenneth: Not really, no. I went to a private school. It was all the thing in those days. Then I got a scholarship to Farnworth Grammar School. Well, first of all, I went to a school- In those days, they were called council schools. I don't know what you'd call them now, because they keep changing all these names, don't they? But the first school for a real education was Cromwell Road School in Swinton, which was next door to Worsley. That was a Rugby League town. Swinton had a great Rugby League side. The school had a great Rugby League side too.

I used to enter the 'Daily Dispatch'- That was a newspaper up in Lancashire then; all gone by the board now. They had this 'Daily Dispatch' Shield. Tremendous competition. All the council schools- Cromwell Road was a great one. I never played for the first team, because I was never any good at rugby.

It was very funny: when I went into the RAF, there was a rugby game – not an important one – and one team was short. They said, "Would you like a game, Kenneth?" I said, "Well, look, I

don't want to do anyone who's a really keen rugby player out of a game." Well, they needed someone. Well, I was a goalkeeper at soccer, so I could catch the ball, and I could kick it. Every time I caught it, everyone shouted, "Kick it," so I kick-

[Break in audio 0:05:33]

I played the first half without knowing that, in those days, in Rugby Union, you could kick the ball out into touch on the full, no matter [where you were]. I didn't even know the rules of the game. Anyway, there we are.

0:05:55

Interviewer: What did your dad do for a living?

Kenneth: Dad had his own firm. He was in the cotton industry. It was very important, from Manchester to Lancashire, as a whole. That was the cotton area of- We didn't grow it, but they processed it and did all sorts of things with it. I was never very well up with what we did with it, but still... When there's a great boom, and there was in the cotton industry, then suddenly, bang, things go wrong in about 1929, wasn't it, when we had the great depression?

I remember that. Everyone had been having happy lives, and life was full of fun and joy. Then, suddenly, there was disaster, and it took a long time to recover. Well, it didn't really recover until the War started.

0:07:01

Interviewer: Did that depression have a direct effect on your family?

Kenneth: Yes, it did, because our standard of living went down. We used to live in a big house in Worsley, called The Priory. As far as I know, it's still there. But we had to move from there, because we couldn't afford it. I won a scholarship to Farnworth Grammar School, when, of course, the thing to do, if you lived round there, was, you went to Manchester Grammar School. But now, I went to Farnworth Grammar School. I used to walk 3 miles to catch a bus to take me to Farnworth, and then finish up on a tram car. Wonderful things, trams. They ought to bring them back.

But it was a very good school. There was another pupil who went there who became quite famous: a little fella with a squeaky voice, called Alan Ball. He went to Farnworth Grammar School. He's very quick to reply to that. Not at the same time, though.

After the War, Alan Ball and I were asked, would we say that the school should be kept in being? Because they wanted to pull it down. So we said, "No, it's a great school. A wonderful academic record and a super football record. It always had a good football team." Well, they didn't listen to us; they just pulled down the school and put up a block of flats, and that was it.

0:08:58

Interviewer: Were you a particularly academic youngster?

Kenneth: No, not really. I was happy to work hard in subjects that I liked. Woodwork, for instance, I couldn't care less about it. I'd get a plane to it, and I'd shave all the wood away. I had no idea

about things like that. I took after my father like that. I always remember, once, something had gone wrong with the latch on the shed we had in the garden, and I helped my dad to repair it. We unscrewed the thing that went out. I don't even know what you call them. In the end, we put it back, and we put it back in exactly the same position. So he said, "No, forget this."

So I was no good with things like that. My dad had a feeling. He always said, "No, it's unfair. We shouldn't take over another man's job. If you were a plumber, you'd do the plumbing, not me. I'm not a plumber. Why should I rob you of a job and a wage?" I've always stuck by that. I think that's a very good philosophy in life.

But I loved English. Mathematics, I found that easy. Sadly, I grew up at a time when, "We have to learn French? Why should we learn French? If the French want to talk to us, let them learn English." That was the attitude in the 1930s. It was a terrible attitude. I feel very jealous when my grandchildren can speak German and French, and then they say, "I must learn some Spanish," because I used to like going there for a holiday. But no, I did-

[Break in audio]

0:11:17

Interviewer: So, overall, are your memories of school happy?

Kenneth: Yes, they were happy. We played football on Saturday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. I was the first team's school goalkeeper. No nonsense about me, you know. I was there. We had Latin in the first period on Wednesday afternoon. After 5 minutes of Latin, the school captain would

come round and ask, could he have all members of the school first 11?

It was a co-educational school, which I think is wonderful. Get the fellas and the girls together early on in life, that's what I say. This lady, Sally Westwood, she was a tremendous person. The girls were absolutely terrified of her, but she was a genius at Latin. I didn't take Latin from [___0:12:21], because school had never had a failure, and I was the biggest looming failure in Latin.

I always remember, once, I sat right at the back of the class, in the corner. They always start there, teachers, don't they? They said, "Right, Wolstenholme, try to translate the first paragraph." Well, I'd looked it up in the notes, and every word was translated. It was marvellous. I had to act it a bit. I stumbled a bit, and I had to think. "When Caesar was in HitherGaul, as we have shown above-" Sally Westwood would listen with great joy, and she said, "That was magnificent. Absolutely tremendous, considering the whole thing was in the notes. Now, could you translate the second paragraph?" Not a clue.

I got on wonderfully well with her. She was a lovely lady. But I gave up Latin. I stood by the old poem that, "Latin is an ancient language, as dead as dead can be. It killed the ancient Romans, and now, it's killing me." I still agree with that. But they did very well, the old ancient Romans. Italy is a nice country, and Rome is fabulous, and Florence. There we are.

0:14:03

Interviewer: Did your father have designs on what you were going to do when you left school, or were you very much your own man?

Kenneth: Yes, he did have designs. He thought I'd make a good lawyer. Well, I don't know. I suppose a lot of lawyers sit in the courts, and hang around, waiting for someone to give them a brief. They're alright. If you're one of the top ones, you make a lot of money, like Cherie Blair. But I wanted to be a sports journalist, so that was it.

So when I left Farnworth Grammar School, I went to Pitman's College and I learnt shorthand and typewriting. You couldn't see the keyboard, and you had to write all these things out, you see. Once you find out how to do it, it's easy.

0:15:03

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Kenneth: I was then 17. Then, of course, the Munich crisis cropped up. It was then that everybody realised there was going to be a war. We were just kidding ourselves that Hitler would say, "This is my last territorial gain in Europe." Well, it was, until the beginning of the next month. So I thought, "Well, at my age, I'll be one of the first to be called up. What should I go into? If I volunteer for something now, it'll be fine."

I didn't fancy the Royal Navy, with due respects to it. I never did any sailing. I once rode a boat on Heaton Park Lake, which is near Manchester. The Army? No. You see, you've got to walk to the war. That's no good at all. But the great thing in 1938 and '39 was flying. Whereas we have the pop stars today, we had the film stars way back yonder. But the great heroes and heroines of 1938, they were the flyers. Amy Johnson, Jim Mollison. There were so many of them.

They used to fly from here to Australia in cockpits when flying was flying. No automatic pilots and rubbish like this. They were tremendous pioneers. So I thought, "That'll do me." So I joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, which was a very, very astute move on my part. Because certainly, in those days – I'm not quite certain about today – you couldn't be a pilot, unless you were a Sergeant. So I started my career in the Royal Air Force as a Sergeant Pilot. That wasn't bad. No AC2, AC1, LAC, and all that nonsense stuff. "Sergeant Pilot Wolstenholme, that'll do."

That gave me a great start to life after the War, because I'd got a job, after learning shorthand and typing, with a weekly newspaper in Manchester, which didn't pay you anything, but they trained you, you see. They'd teach you how newspapers were produced and how they would be written. You didn't get a penny. Then we were called up.

When I extended my flying training, it took some time before they- We didn't have all those aircraft, you see. Everybody knew how short we were of everything. They'd wonder how we won. But I went to Sywell in Northampton. There was a man there who had had tuberculosis, which was very rife in those days. He got himself a job outside. He was told he'd have to. Of course, the services didn't want him. He was marvellous. He'd sit there all day: "Aircraft number?" Take off and what time it landed.

Then he told me he was a journalist, so I wanted to chat to him all the time. We became very close. Then I moved off from the single-engine flying to twin-engine flying, and went somewhere else. That was the end of my association with the timekeeper.

But at the end of the War, I had risen to the glorious rank of Flight Lieutenant – substantive Flight Lieutenant, not an acting one – and I was on demob leave, you see. Bolton Wanderers

got to the semi final of the FA Cup against Charlton, and they played at Aston Villa. I'd never been to Aston Villa. That was in Birmingham. That was a long way away.

So I wrote to the Football Association and said that I was a bomber pilot on demob leave, and an officer in Bomber Command, and I was also a sports journalist before the War. Well, I thought it would too long a letter to say that I worked, for 6 months, for a local weekly newspaper at nil salary, so I didn't bother with that. It was nothing to do with the Football Association, anyway; not their business.

They sent me a press ticket. I couldn't believe my eyes. Today, they'd pass it round as a comic letter, wouldn't they? And then give it to the police and say, "Take him away to a mental hospital," or something.

So I was looking around, thrilled by what I could see. I heard a voice. I can't repeat what he said, really, because this is going out in a family programme. He said, "What are you doing here?" I looked down, and it was the timekeeper. His name was [Harold Maize 0:21:19], who was then the Sports Editor of the 'Sunday Empire News'.

He asked me what I was going to do when I finally got out of the RAF, and I said, "Well, I want to be a sports journalist." So he rang me up the following week and said, "Could you do us a piece on league cricket?" which is very big up in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Well, Worsley Cricket Club was having its centenary. I was a junior member before the War. They sent me all the bumph about it, so I wrote something for them, and finished up by saying, 'Well, many happy returns to Worsley Cricket Club, probably one of the oldest cricket clubs in the north of England.'

At the same time, the BBC North Region radio was trying to find the oldest cricket club in the north of England. So I got a telephone call from the BBC, and I was invited to go on their sports programmes. That's how it all started. So but for the War, but for Harold Maize being a timekeeper and not being very well, and the Football Association being very generous and sending me an FA Cup semi final press pass, none of this might have happened.

Interviewer: Now, I'd like to talk about your career as a journalist in a moment, but let's go back to 1939 again, because you had quite an active war.

0:22:51 Can we talk, first, about the incident involving your sister being in Germany?

Kenneth: Well, she went on a school trip. Wonderful. Schools, in those days, used to take their pupils abroad. I remember, in Farnworth Grammar School, we went to Paris. There was a huge exhibition in Paris. But my sister's school, Pendleton High School, they went to Germany. Well, it all crept up, and suddenly, wham, bam, hiya, man, he's walked into Poland. He was told, in no uncertain manner, if he didn't get out in 48 hours, we'd be at war with them.

There was young Margaret and her pals all in Germany. They were rounded up and they did get back. They were allowed back. I suppose none of them were Jewish or Gypsies, or people like that, so Hitler said, "Get rid of them. Let the Brits feed them." So they got home, but it was a bit scary. Very scary, in fact.

0:24:06

Interviewer: You are very modest about your wartime career. Is it something you have talked about much over the years?

Kenneth: No, not really, because wars are terrible things. They really are the most stupid things. Even today, I sit in front of the television, and the Israelis and the Arabs, just because the Israelis go and open fire and shoot a couple of Arabs, then the Arabs have got to shoot a couple of Israelis. You don't solve anything, do you?

Even the Second World War didn't really solve anything, did it? We knocked Germany about a bit, but so what? I've forgotten why we ever started. Well, it was one man being so greedy, wasn't it? He wanted to control everything and everybody. It wasn't nice. Nobody enjoyed it. But you had great fun in the services. In the RAF, in particular, we had a lot of fun.

0:25:27

Interviewer: Were you a bomber pilot for the whole of the war?

Kenneth: Yes.

0:25:32

Interviewer: So you were always based in this country?

Kenneth: Always in this country. That's what annoyed us. When they announced the money we'd get when we were demobilised, if

you were only based in this country, you'd only get a certain amount. You'd get double if you'd ever been abroad. Well, we were abroad almost every night we flew. Oh, no, that wasn't the same as being- We had to live abroad. All those nice people who lived in Cairo for the War- I don't [___0:26:16] in that, because they had the nasty end of the stick. But a lot of fellas just sat there and had a great time.

It was all scary and frightening, but it did a great deal for aviation, you see. We wouldn't have had this tremendous development in aviation and in aircraft if there hadn't been a war.

Interviewer: You, presumably, lost a lot of friends there.

Kenneth: Oh, yes. Well, the average expectation of life for a bomber crew was about 10 trips, because 10% was the average loss for any raid. So you can work it out that, when you took off for the 10th trip, you knew you were near something or other. But some lasted. Some were lucky, and came out of it. Some were very unlucky.

0:27:27

Interviewer: How many trips did you fly?

Kenneth: I did almost 100. But I flew some wonderful aeroplanes. The first aeroplane I operated on was a Blenheim. Now, they were very much out of date. They were great aircraft in their days, but their days were in 1938 and '39. But when we progressed,

we suddenly came on the Lancaster and the Mosquito. They were the 2 great bombing aircraft.

Well, the Mosquito could do anything. It was a fighter, night fighter, and it was such a versatile aeroplane. The Lancaster was a tremendous bombing aircraft. When you come to think, a Flying Fortress could take, to Berlin, about 2,000 tons of bombs, with 13 aircrew. So shoot that aircraft down, and you've got 13 highly-trained men either dead or captured by the enemy.

The Mosquito could do the same trip in half the time, or at twice the speed. It was a tremendously fast aeroplane. It could carry the bomb bay full of bombs, with a bomb under each wing. Only 2 crew members. They could get there and get back so quickly. It was an incredible aeroplane made out of wood. No screws, no anything; just wood that was glued.

0:29:28

Interviewer: Do you remember feeling great fear very often?

Kenneth: Yes, all the time. It was awful. Oh, yes. Anybody who says they were never frightened, well, is telling porkies, and he knows he is. You see, when you flew out and you got near the enemy coast, you could either see it, or you knew you were nearly there. Then they started shooting. Not a very nice way to greet your guests, is it?

We tried to work out the routes to miss out on their big airfields and the big cities, but you couldn't do it all the time. This is where you'd get a tremendous barrage of-

[Break in audio]

Interviewer: … The feelings that you had as you approach a country, but my guess is that, maybe, it started before that.

0:30:49 Any doubts you might have had? Any feelings of unease and-

Kenneth: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: So what I'd really like to hear, if you could do it, is to be taken through a bombing raid, from before the raid begins.

Kenneth: You see, the whole thing in any bombing raid or any operation: it started early. The Air Ministry and good old Butch Harris, as we happily called him, because he was very popular with the bomber aircrews, we always said that he called his second in command and said, "Will you bring the map out?" He'd get the map put on the wall, and he said, "Hand me my dart," and he'd shut his eyes and he'd throw the dart at the map, and where the dart went in, "We'll attack that place tonight."

Then they checked on all the groups: how many aircraft could they put up? So you were sitting there, and they'd say, "Okay, so many people on operations tonight." So you knew, then, that you were going, and you had to do air tests. You had to take the aircraft up and see that it was working absolutely perfectly. There was no use trying to kid them that it wasn't, because they had a spare one which they could give you.

The groundcrew, who are often forgotten in all these things, they were absolutely so keen. They were in love with the

aeroplane as much as we were. They were also in love with the crew that flew it. We had a Flight Sergeant who was in charge of the flight – the maintenance – to see everything was right. His name was Flight Sergeant Sergeant. He was a Flight Sergeant, you see.

So when we got out, after a night flying test, the slightest thing wrong, we'd complain about. Old Chiefy Sergeant – because everyone referred to a Flight Sergeant as 'Chiefy' – he'd put his hand up and grab his hat. If things got worse, he'd take his hat off, and by this time, all the AC2s who'd been working on the job, they were now ready for a quick start. If he threw his hat down, they would all have given any Olympic sprinter a run for their money. Then he'd stamp on his hat, and he'd absolutely crucify them.

The one thing we could stand was little marks on the Perspex windscreen, because to be flying along and see this mark, that would be a night fighter. You're convinced it's a night fighter. So that had to be polished, absolutely. So, too, did the whole of the fuselage, because that's why the Mosquito was so fast, so manoeuvrable, and such a great aeroplane. Everything had to be smooth. That's why they didn't bother with screws and all that sort of stuff; just the glue. Everything was beautifully turned out.

Then the next thing, you'd be told when the briefing was. That all depended on what time we were taking off. They would come in and say why we were attacking this city. Then they'd say, "Well, this is what it produced. This is the route we're going to take. Some people are going to do all sorts of kidology trips," as if they were getting it right, and they weren't, and confusing the Germans. I don't know whether it did confuse the Germans, but we liked to think it did.

They'd work out the bomb load. Then the navigator would be plotting how we were going to get there. So you were building up to it all the time. It was a bit like producing a show. Then we'd have a very meagre meal, but we always-

[Break in audio]

Interviewer: Okay, so if we could bring it up from the beginning of where you described having a meal.

Kenneth: Yes, so we all went into the mess. It was very quiet. Everyone tried to make a laugh out of the whole thing, but anybody walking in could tell it was false laughter. But we had a light meal, and then it would be down into the crew room. We all had lockers, and we'd put on the flying suit and all sorts of things: the Mae West, which was a thing we all wore, so that if we came down in the sea, we'd still float. Thank you, Mae West. You saved many a life.

It was very nervy then. You were getting ready. The WAAFs used to drive trucks. You'd walk out there and you'd get in. The aircraft were dispersed all over the airfield. You knew what time you took off. But of course, nobody could talk now. You couldn't have the control tower telling you, "Switch on your engines." So everything had to be done by the timing you'd been given, because there was a great deal of panic going on about security and whether the Germans would know we were operating.

For instance, you weren't allowed to make a telephone call, or receive a telephone call, if there was an operation. So any German spy who wanted to find out anything only had to ring up any stations in his area, if there were spies in the area. If

nobody answered the telephone, he could always ring Berlin and say, "Yes, they're operating, because they're not answering the telephone. They've all lifted the receivers off."

So you got there in time. There was the great cockpit drill. You'd done it all in the night-flying test, but you went through it again, to see if there was enough fuel in there and see that everything was working alright. The bombs were not fused, of course, but you had to see that they were onboard.

Then, okay, everything had to be closed up. It was almost like the old flying days when the men would come and do your propellor, because they'd do signals to you: "Right, start your port engine," and they all started. Then you had, "Chocks away," and you'd do this sort of thing, and they'd pull the chocks away from the wheels. Then you taxied. Then there was a wave from the groundcrew, who would then stay up all night, until you got back. They didn't go off to the boozer, or anything like that.

You see, the lighting was very, very dim. In fact, it was nil. You knew in which order you had to take off, and everything was done by Aldis lamps. There would be someone at the end of the runway who would just shine a lamp at you, and then you had to get there and take off, and then everyone was on his own.

It was frightening, the number of aircraft, sometimes, that were in the sky. You'd be climbing, and you'd see a Lancaster suddenly going over the top of you. You know how we talk about a near miss of airliners these days? "I think I was 1,000ft away from him." I think, sometimes, they were about 100ft away, at that time. You just had to hope that it wouldn't be all that bad.

We had some special equipment on the Mosquito Pathfinder markers, and we had to do calibration tests, sometimes. We used to go to Aachen for this, because there was a heavy-artillery school. It was dangerous if it was the beginning of the course, because the instructors were firing the guns. But then, when the pupils were firing, [good Lord 0:41:07], they'd be all over the place, at the start. But they learnt quickly, you see. On the run, you'd say, "Yes, they're doing well: 7 out of 10."

But as soon as you'd dropped your markers, now, it was every man for himself, how he got home. There was none of this hoo-ha: "There's Charlie. He seems to be in a bit of trouble. Let's go and guard him." That didn't happen. It happens in the films, but certainly not in real life.

The Germans would expect you to dive towards England and get on a course home, and dive, a bit, to get a lot of speed. So they'd put the barrage at about 2,000ft below the height you were flying. So they were just as clever as you. So the clever thing to do was climb away to the left, away from England. Then it was a bit difficult, because if you kept on, you'd be running into our main force of bombers throwing 10-ton bombs around the place.

It was a great relief to cross the enemy coast and get over the North Sea, but you couldn't relax, because that was when the night fighters would come around. They still reckoned it was fair game to shoot you down, even when you were on the way home, which was a little unsporting. But they didn't play cricket, you see, in Germany, so they didn't have those sorts of niceties.

Although, I must admit that we did dirty tricks like that. In one of the books I wrote, a German wrote about one of the Nuremberg raids. They were told that the Lancasters were coming over to bomb Nuremberg, and the Mosquitos, if we

weren't marking, we would come there and try to bomb the airfield. This fella wrote a marvellous story. He was taking off, and a Mosquito came down and dropped a stick of bombs, and blew up the runway right in front of him. He must have been marvellous. He swerved off the runway and got onto the taxi track, and still took off, which was asking for trouble. But he took off.

After the War, he wrote to the Air Ministry, and he said he got the number and the letter and everything about the Mosquito that dropped his bombs and could have killed him as well, and it was me. I've never met him. We never even corresponded. But that was the sort of thing that happened. Dirty tricks, like that, went on.

0:45:05

Interviewer: Do you still enjoy flying?

Kenneth: I don't pilot my own aircraft. I wouldn't mind doing that. That's lovely, just flying. It's a boring way of travelling, isn't it? On these big airliners, they just put the autopilot on and say, "Right, let's have a cup of coffee." But it was exhilarating, yes.

0:45:39

Interviewer: Did you fly at all after the War?

Kenneth: Only very little, because I suddenly realised I was still in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, you see. I'd forgotten that. I went to Barton Airport, where I'd originally started my flying

career. An instructor said, "Okay, I'll come with you." He sat in the front seat, and I sat in the back seat. He was an acting Flight Lieutenant. I think he was probably a Pilot Officer, acting Flight Lieutenant.

Tiger Moths were super aeroplanes to fly, but they were very difficult. You only had to pull the control column back a bit, and the thing would shoot up. But tremendous aeroplanes, and [___0:46:36] coming down. They're very difficult to land, because they could do this. I hit the ground. I was never very good at landing aeroplanes. They just bumped a bit. This one hit the ground a bit heavily, and he said, "I've got her," and he opened the throttles.

We had a stand-up row as he flew away. I said, "Don't you ever do that with me in the back seat again. I've seen more people killed doing that than have been killed by the Germans." Of course, I could get away with that, because I was a substantive Flight Lieutenant. I was a higher rank than him, so I could tell him to shut up.

But I didn't continue, because it was so expensive. But sometimes, in 'Match of the Day', we'd fly there and back to a game – it was the speed – and the pilot would say, "Do you want to fly it?" It's as easy as pie. Once you've got it in the air, it's simple to keep it steady and on the right track.

I can see why people get a thrill out of it, but they're all closed in, you see, when they fly these aircraft today. Whereas if you flew the old-time aircraft, your face would be hit by the wind, and it's lovely. You think of people like Jean Batten that had been flying through the Alps in one of those aircraft, having to get through all the crevices and couldn't reach the heights.

Interviewer: There's something I'd like to just return to for a moment, before we move onto the post-War years, and this will, I suppose, ultimately lead us onto sport.

0:48:20 When you were at school still, were you a very sport lad?

Kenneth: What do you mean by that? Yes, I was very interested in sport, especially football. Football was my great love. The schools, in those days, the boys played football, and the girls played netball, I think. They call it basketball now, don't they? They all make millions out of playing netball, which is surprising.

I'd play football in the mornings, sometimes, with school, and then rush home and play for the local team in the afternoon. It was all lovely. Then cricket. I had a wonderful time living in Manchester before the War. My mum would take me to Old Trafford, the cricket ground. I'd have my sandwiches and lemonade, and we'd sit there and you'd watch these great cricketers, like Wally Hammond and Ernest Tyldesley and – dear me, there are so many of them – Duleepsinhji. Because most of the England team were Indians, at one time.

It was wonderful to watch them. We would never do what they do today: transgress and go over the boundary line. Well, you might do it once, but you wouldn't do it a second time. It was glorious. I remember a newspaper seller telling me that the way to sell papers was- Newspaper sellers used to write their own contents bills, you see, instead of them being run off by the newspaper.

This newsagent, he'd write down, 'Lancashire win toss. Washbrook on way to century.' So everyone would buy this, you see, and it would be, 'Lancashire, 3 for no wickets. Washbrook not out, 2.' Well, he was on his way to the century,

wasn't he? People would rush to Old Trafford to go and see- But it was great fun.

So I was, yes. I was very keen on sport.

0:51:11

Interviewer: So when the war was over and you had to make decisions, and you enjoyed writing and you loved journalism, and particularly sports journalism, was that because you didn't see yourself going into being an active professional sportsman, or was it because you actually were more interested in taking a global interest in sport and football and becoming a communicator?

Kenneth: Yes, I think you're right in- Be a commentator, or would I have loved to-

Interviewer: Yes.

Kenneth: In many ways, I would love to have been a performer. I'd love to have played in goal for England. Perhaps the England selectors wouldn't have been all that happy, or the crowds. But there was a great loss at the time of the years during the War. We weren't allowed to play sports. We would, at one time. But I remember, I fractured the waist of my scaphoid once, and all the little bones in your wrist. It was a long time before I could fly, but I did try to fly once, to air test the reserve aircraft, but I had my wrist in plaster. I opened the throttles, and I couldn't get the throttle back, because the plaster was held tight. God, it was awful.

There were 2 other fellas who did something to their shoulders playing rugby. So Bomber Command issued an order that operational aircrew were not allowed to take part in dangerous sports. So that was very considerate of them. So we didn't have much time to train. We were there just to fly aeroplanes, that's all.

It was great to become a communicator and to write about football and things like that. It all developed to go and travel the world to see all the great exponents of sport, and things like that.

Interviewer: When you initially started working, you were writing, and you say you started working for BBC Radio.

0:53:48 How long did the radio work continue for?

Kenneth: Well, until television came back on the scene. There had been television before the War, but only a few small sets in the London area, that's all. The same thing happened when they reopened. Then I read, in the paper, that they were going to start this 'Magic Lantern' stuff. So I wrote to the Head of Outside Broadcasts, radio and television – and I say it that way, because it was radio and television. Radio was much more important than television – and I said, 'I'd like to be a commentator on this new thing.'

I went down for an audition, and there were 4 of us, all together, who were auditioned. But the producer got acute appendicitis, which developed the next day, so there was no way of recording anything. No recording methods at all in those days. So they couldn't judge who was likely to be a good commentator.

Then the BBC announced it was going to leapfrog up and down the country, and there was great jubilation that the BBC had discovered there was life north of Watford. They'd got the rights to do an amateur international trial. It rolls of your lips, doesn't it? What great days they were.

The northern counties were playing the southern counties, and of course, it had to be played down in London. It couldn't go north; too cold. So the northern counties against the southern counties at Romford. They said, "Who's this northern fella who came down for that audition?" So they asked me if I'd go down and do it. I said, "Yes." The fee was good: £6. Don't laugh about that, because I only got 10 times that for doing the World Cup Final in 1966.

I did it with a man called Jimmy Jewell. Now, there was a comic act, at the time, called Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warris, but this Jimmy Jewell had nothing to do with that comic act. This Jimmy Jewell was a very brave man. He was such a brave man. He was a referee before the War, and he refereed the 1938 Cup Final, which went to extra time. The first one ever at Wembley. Goalless draw after 90 minutes. They played the extra time, and he gave a penalty against Huddersfield Town, to Preston North End, in the last minute of extra time. He was a grave fella, wasn't he? Preston scored, and they won the FA Cup in 1938.

I got along superbly with Jimmy Jewell. We worked together well doing amateur matches. We weren't allowed to do any of the professional stuff. One Sunday night, I got a telephone call – I think it was a Sunday night – from Jimmy's wife, who said, "I've got some sad news for you. Jimmy's gone upstairs to have a bath, and he's had a heart attack and he's dead." So that left the BBC with me. They never really realised how lucky they were. But there we are. That's how I really started. It's a

case not of who you know, but where you are at any certain time. Poor old Jimmy, he was a great loss.

0:58:10

Interviewer: Did you take the art of commentating- Was it something you just did because it came naturally to you, or was it something you thought about greatly and worked very hard at perfecting?

Kenneth: Yes, it was, because Mr S J [De La Biniar], who was about 6'8", he was the Head of Outside Broadcasts in those days. He was the only man that- What was his name now? A radio man. We're going to have to throw that away, because I can't remember his name now. But he was another very tall fella. He used to do a radio show from about 5:00 until about 6:30.

0:58:59

Interviewer: Who would that have been?

Kenneth: Yes, well, it's alright. You see, we're all suffering from Alzheimer's disease now. Anyway, Lobby, as we called him, said to me, "There's no advice I can give you. We don't know what a good commentator would do." I thought, "Well, if they're watching the pictures, they don't need me to tell them that Bill Smith has passed the ball forward to Sid Jones, or it's been intercepted by Billy Biggs, because they can see it. I suddenly realised that the commentator was only there to add to the picture, to make certain that anything that happens off the camera, you can talk to them about it and just mention it.

But sadly, the Americans brought in a method of commentary where they just talk all the time, and we have developed that now. We've copied that, which I loathe. Because you get commentators saying, "That's a beautiful cross from David Beckham. What a superb header from so and so. It's just hit the bar and gone over the top." Then in would come the summariser, saying, "Well, that was a great cross by David Beckham, wasn't it, and a super header? But if he could have just brought it down a bit, but it skimmed the cross bar and went over the top." I thought, "Yes, we can see that. Now, why tell us not once, but twice, what happened?"

I tried to tell some commentators, once, that the finest bit of commentating I've ever heard was on golf. It was the Open at St Andrew's. Doug Sanders was playing on the last day, the 72nd hole. He and Nicklaus were dead level, and it came to be his putt. Nicklaus had putted out. Henry Longhurst put it beautifully. He said, "Now, Doug Sanders of the United States needs this 3ft putt for the Championship." Henry always picked the right words. He never said, "The Open." It was, "The Championship."

I don't know whether you've ever played at St Andrew's or seen that 18th hole. Dear me, there isn't a flat bit on it. He looked down and down and searched everything. Then he got his stance over the ball, and Longhurst didn't say a word. Then he bent forward and brushed away what he's since admitted was an imaginary piece of grass, so he's obviously got the [yippies 1:02:26] a bit. As he did that, Henry Longhurst said, "Oh dear." Then he putted, and we saw the ball going up to the hole, and then it just fell away and it missed the hole.

So I said to these commentators, "What do you think Henry Longhurst said then?" They said, "We don't know, because he couldn't swear, could he, and say, 'Cor blimey, how did he

miss that?'" I said, "He didn't say anything. He didn't have to. He'd said that he needed that putt. That ball had to go in the hole, and he's won the Championship, and it didn't go in the hole, so he hasn't won the Championship." They were flabbergasted. They couldn't understand that.

I've always had a theory that on radio, doing a radio commentary, silence is death. If you go silent on a radio commentary, dear me, but silence is golden on television. You don't really need commentators that go on all the time, and then tell us what they had for breakfast. You can tell commentators who have written out a little script about a match and how many times the teams have met. It's just to get it going. You can say, "Hey, when you come to the end of that script, what are you going to say then?" But it is a form of commentary which has now been accepted here.

There's another wonderful story about Henry Longhurst. He did the Masters. On one of the short holes, Arnold Palmer teed off, and he said, "Arnold Palmer now, using his 7 iron." Because they get little signals from the caddies for which club the player is using. It wasn't a bad shot. It wasn't a marvellous shot, thinking of Arnold Palmer. So the ball came across and landed. Henry didn't say anything. He was probably having a drink, but he didn't say anything, because really, we could see where the ball had landed.

The Director nearly went bananas. He said, "What's happened to that goddam Limey? He's not dead, is he? Get him to speak." But the Americans loved speaking, you see. If it goes down well for them, that's fair enough, but I don't like that sort of thing.

Interviewer: You feel it's stating the obvious.

Kenneth: Yes. You don't need that.

Interviewer: We'll talk about specific sports with John in a moment, because as I said earlier, I'm way out of my depth there. What interests me is, you've led a very, very full life, and probably been to all sorts of places and see all sorts of things, and seen much, much change.

1:05:51 As you've come, now, to live here, in Devon, by the coast, and you reflect on a really full life, what sorts of thoughts go through your mind about where you are now and what's happened in those years?

Kenneth: I don't know. I enjoy it here, especially if the weather is very good. What I do miss is the fact that – it's a backwood, isn't it? – you can't get the good football players to come here, because they say, "No, there's so much travelling." I think this is sad, because Plymouth Argyle have got a good record. Torquay United and Exeter City- Exeter City produced the man who was my boyhood hero, Dick Pym, the Bolton goalkeeper. It's wonderful to see the big stars, but of course, you don't see the big stars in Devon or Cornwall, do you?

But, of course, Cornwall, on the rugby side, they're bananas about it. [They don't need 1:07:08] to go and win the County Championship every year. More than once I've travelled back from Paddington with the Cornish supporters. They don't misbehave, but they're certainly not silent.

So there comes a time when you can't go on, and you've just got to say, "Well, this is it." I don't think I'd be able to do a

proper commentary now. My eyesight is not all that good now, so there we are.

Interviewer: But you've got a keen mind, and you, clearly, are well up to date with everything that's going on.

1:07:59 So as an observer now, which is, perhaps, what was in your mind when you started out, as an observer of the world, and the sports world in particular, what pleases you and what saddens you?

Kenneth: Well, a lot of things please me. I'm very worried about the way football is going. I love the game of football, and I'm delighted that Pelé called it the beautiful game. But now, money is beginning to take over sport, and I think this could well be a disaster for sport.

We used to have an expression: "That's not cricket, old chap. That's not cricket." What is cricket today? It's appalling, isn't it? For behaviour, cricket would come almost last. And they want fourth umpires. People don't respect the referees or the umpires. They said, "Let's use television," but that's not going to give you the true story. It all depends which angle you're shooting from, doesn't it? Okay, television, today, could show you 21 angles about the same incident, so you'd have to keep changing your mind: "Was it or wasn't it, or will it be?"

And money is everything, isn't it? I hope I'm not here to see it, but I have a great fear that the bubble might well burst. Television is pouring millions into football, for instance, and other sports. That's very good of them, but they might find something else to attract their attention, and then we're on a

rocky road, aren't we? It's a case of, "Where's Dorothy?" Over the rainbow.

1:10:25

Interviewer: So those are some of the things that worry you about the future. What gives you pleasure now? What do you feel very positive about?

Kenneth: I think the improvement in the stadia. For instance, football or rugby used to be a man's game, didn't it? Only the fellas went. They didn't want any of these women. But now, [they give them this comfort 1:11:00]. They can sit down and watch the entertainment, and the facilities are there. Alright, people say they don't like this corporate hospitality. Fine. If you can't afford to be on the invitation list for corporate hospitality, that's hard luck, but you can always go into the local pub and have a pie and a pint and enjoy that sort of thing.

So I think it's good that clubs are looking at better facilities for their supporters. It's very difficult for them, because there are so many football grounds. In the old days, they were built in heavily overcrowded residential areas. [It's alright them talking 1:12:08] about Wembley. When they built it, in 1923, there were all fields there. Fine. It didn't take them 2 hours to get to Wembley from the West End. In fact, a fella on a white horse, in the 1923 Wembley Final, it took him 12 minutes.

[Break in audio 1:12:29 - 1:12:51]

What are we talking about then?

Interviewer: Let's pop back to a family subject, and talk about how you came to meet your wife, and you, as a young man in love.

Kenneth: Yes. Well, I met her before the War. It was a crowd. Boys and girls would go out together. I thought she was smashing. She'd do for me. Then I went to a party. I always remember this now. She'd kill me, if she was here now, if she heard me telling the world this. We were all at a party. There wasn't alcohol drinking or anything. It's funny when you think. We'd have cups of tea.

One of the fellas said, "There's no sugar in this. Go and get me some. Let's have some." Joan, who was later to become my wife, said, "Don't worry, I'll get it." They both went out of the room together. We didn't see them again for 2 hours. That was it: I was jilted; tossed aside.

Well, then on 1st September – that was the Friday – we were told to report to our town centres, which, for me, was Manchester. Bob and Joan went to the pictures together, you see. I don't know what they saw. There were some great films in those days, though, weren't there? Bob said, "I think we ought to go and see Kenneth and wish him the best of luck. He'll be dead by Christmas, you know." He told me that later. I thought, "Thank you."

Anyway, then I appeared at the party, you see. We all had fish and chips. We went across the road. But that came to nothing. Bob said, "I don't want to know." Anyway, I went away, off into the RAF, and I think the 2 mothers did a lot of things under the table. I don't even know the story behind that. The next thing, Joan was called up into the ATS. Her father didn't like that. He thought that was disgusting that women should be in uniform.

I was going to London. We'd get stand downs sometimes. So I met her, and we went to the pictures. Of course, this always raises a laugh. We stayed at the Regent Palace, which was about 5 bob a night: fairly expensive. Joan was a Private. I had to get back. I had to catch the 6:00 train, the next morning, to get up to around Cambridgeshire. That's where we were based.

So I did the gentleman's thing: I paid for her room, you see. She went up to pay the bill, and the receptionist said, "No, that's alright. The RAF officer has paid it." She was fuming.

Anyway, things went on and on and on, and we got married. How long were we married? 1945. Because they didn't like us getting married when we were flying operationally. I think 1945, we got married, and she died in 1998. That was 53 years, wasn't it? 53 years, my goodness. But she died, and there we are.

We had 1 daughter, who died of Leukaemia, and we were left with 1. [Lena 1:17:21] came along afterwards. Cor blimey. She's coming up for 50. Cut that out, otherwise she'll play hell.

No, we had a very happy life together. Now, the one thing was, she never interfered with my job. I had to go away so much, and go abroad. We'd go away on trips. Once, I was in Lima, in Peru, and Paul Fox said to me, "Ken, there's a call for you." We had a line, so we could talk to the BBC Headquarters. He said, "There's trouble at home." We'd been burgled, and all I could think of saying was, "How are my golf clubs? They've not taken those, have they?" I think we were burgled 6 times all together.

But no, we had a very happy life together, and it was very sad when she died.

1:18:30

Interviewer: A lot of people who moved in the sorts of circles you've moved in have been in show business – because you were in show business, really, weren't you?

Kenneth: Yes.

Interviewer: Aren't so lucky with relationships.

Kenneth: No. I think it's how you… I don't think you can interfere with someone's profession. People say, "Come on, you don't want to go there, do you? You don't want to go and work for them." Well, if it's a good job, you go and work for them, don't you? If you've got to work until midnight, you work until midnight. People talk about unsociable hours. Well, all hours are unsociable, aren't they, unless you make them sociable? In this business, it's terribly unsociable hours. But Joan never bothered about things like that.

I can tell you a story about her. She never once said, "Why don't you take me to the Cup Final?" We were at a dinner and ball one night, and there was a man who was on the Football Association Council. I knew him well. He said to her, "How do you like Wembley on Cup Final day, Mrs Wolstenholme?" She said, "I don't know. I've never been there. Kenneth never got me a ticket." Because they didn't dish out tickets to us like that. They were very mean with them, the Football Association were. He said, "You must never miss a Cup Final at Wembley for the want of a ticket." True to his word, the next 2 years, she got 2 tickets to the Cup Final.

Sadly, he died, otherwise it would've been alright. The first final she saw was West Bromwich Albion against Preston. I said to her, "Love, you don't anything about football, do you? Just sit there and watch the man in a white shirt with the number 7 on his back. That's Tom Finney of Preston North End. Just watch him, and then you'll see how this game should be played."

Well, the terrible thing about Tom Finney was… Well, I might not say he never played a good game at Wembley, but he rarely did, whereas Stanley Matthews loved Wembley. Tom Finney never really turned his dial up at Wembley, great player that he was.

So I said to her, "You don't need to rush at the end of the match. We've got a bit of work to do. I'll meet you in the big, long bar. I shall be at the far end. You just walk along and I'll be looking for you, and I'll wave when I see you." So we did that, and [I said, "Yes, good 1:21:38]."

Now, West Bromwich Albion play in blue and white, and so did Preston, so you couldn't tell one from the other, you see. Well, you couldn't tell as the supporters. But suddenly, from a distance of a good 20 to 25 yards – Preston had been beaten 3-2 – my ever-loving wife said, in a loud voice, shouting to me above all the hubble-bubble, "I didn't think much of that fella, Finney, you told me to watch."

I said to her, "That's the equivalent of going into Westminster Abbey and shouting, 'Down with God.'" I thought she was going to be lynched and thrown over the balcony onto Wembley Way.

She never wanted to go to Wembley again. She said, "No, you let someone to whom a Cup Final ticket would be such a great present go. I'm not a football follower." She was a good netball

player, apparently. But she never wanted to go again. I think she was really sensible. It didn't mean anything to her, so there we are.

1:23:09

Interviewer: You seem a very philosophical sort of chap. Does faith play a great part in your life?

Kenneth: Yes. I think you've got to have faith in yourself. I'm not a particularly religious man, but I'm not anti-religion or anything like that. During the War, if the flight got very bad or the whole thing was getting out of hand, and there were fighters, you'd say, "Oh my God, save us." I'd say, "Yes, marvellous. You blaspheme for a week, and you go up there now, and you ask Him to save you.

But no, I think of religion in a strange way. What worries me is that there are so many religions. I don't know which one is the best and which one is the more reliable, and which one is right, you see, because they can't all be right, surely, can they? I think one has got to respect everybody else's. But I think one has got to respect how people live.

I don't think it's up to us to say, "I don't like the way the Muslims go about things. They say it's bad to drink alcohol. How do they know?" Well, if that's their faith or laws, well, you don't drink alcohol. Although I know, when they come over here, they do, don't they? They have whiskey and Coca-Cola, because it looks like Coca-Cola, and you can't tell. But if you're listening up there, that's true; they do it.

One religion that impressed me tremendously was the Buddhists in places like Thailand. They have a terrible

standard of living, by our standards, anyway. But they feel that in the coming of the second life, they will get their reward for what they've put up with in the first. Well, I don't know whether I believe in the fact that we're going to have a second life, so I'd rather have all the good stuff here and now.

But they are so placid. They never lose their tempers. They always say, "Calm down. You must never shout at people." There are so many religions. Then there are some that do strange things, which I can't understand, but there we are.

Interviewer: You seem a very tolerant sort of chap.

Kenneth: Yes. Well, I try to be. I don't think that whatever I say or whatever I do is right and the only way. You've got to be tolerant about people. I think you've got to respect people more. Even in sport, there is no respect, now, is there, for umpires, referees, and things like that? Which I think is abominable. Okay, we're playing a game, and the referee says, "Offside." Well, it's offside. Don't let's [throw a 1:27:18] deputation to the referee, who's not going to change his mind, anyway.

So I think you've got to keep this sort of thing going throughout your life. You get to politics… Well, let's not, really, because I think the politicians are all tarred with the same brush.

1:27:47

Interviewer: But sport clearly matters greatly to you. Do you think that if children play more sport, they pick up valuable lessons for life?

Kenneth: Yes, as long as they don't pick up the bad things. You see, this is what worries about the behaviour by some of the big professional- Not footballers. It's not only footballers. Big professional sportsmen. Kids see it on television or see them in person, and they will copy their bad habits. People will square up to people on a football pitch, or this business where they invade a pitch at the cricket.

You need 4 runs to win, so all your hooligan fans stream onto the pitch. I wouldn't have conceded the match. I'd have said, "Right, it should be called no contest. That would've been hard luck for you, and you wouldn't have got the points." Because I don't think they should have been allowed to say they won the match, because they didn't. Well, the players did. They're a very good side and played very well. But I feel the spectators should have been punished, and told, "Right, you've lost your team," whenever they did lose their team.

But there we are. No-one takes any notice of me about these things.

1:29:07

Interviewer: John, do you want to just-

John: Yes. Do the match first, and then we'll do-

Interviewer: And address it to me.

John: And address it to you. [Perhaps you should] just ask the question.

Kenneth: Yes, people say to me, "What's the greatest football match you've ever seen?" Well, the answer has got to be, in a way, the 1966 World Cup Final. The greatest game of football I've ever seen was the 1960 European Cup Final. Tremendous football by 2 great teams, Real Madrid and Eintracht Frankfurt. But the World Cup came to England. England got to the final, and that was tremendous.

Now, many people have said, "You only won it because you played every game at Wembley." Well, every host nation plays at home in the World Cup Finals. God bless them, they've got to keep winning. Now, we played in the first group. Uruguay, that was the opening match, which, if you want to bet, have a bet that it's a goalless draw on the first match of any World Cup Final competition, and so it was.

Then we played Mexico. We beat them. Mexico was always a troublesome nation, but we beat them 2-0. Then we had to play France. Now, they were a lot of people's favourites, but we beat them. That's when Nobby Styles got a bit of a reputation, because we went on, then, to play Argentina. Now, they, I think, could have won the World Cup, and should have won the World Cup, in a way, if they'd behaved properly. But this went bananas. They were great footballers and had the talent to win it, but we beat them 1-0.

So then we were in the semi-final. Then the players admitted this to me. They said, "Hey, we've only got 1 more match to win, and we're in the final." There was the great story when Alf Ramsey said to Nobby Styles- Well, he never called him Nobby; he gave him his proper name. He said to him, "Norbert, I want you to mark Eusébio." Nobby, always with a laugh on his face, said, "What, forever?"

We played Portugal in the semi-final, and we won. We all, suddenly, sat there, dumfounded. "We're in the final, and against Germany." I saw them win in 1954, the first time they'd been allowed into the World Cup. Holy mackerel, they won it, and beat the unbeatable Hungarians. So, "[___1:32:18] they're going to be a bit tough."

It wasn't a great game, as such, but it was exciting. There was so much you could argue about. They still say, "Was the ball over the line?" Now, if you think, the ball is going up, like that, and it hits the elliptical cross bar. It puts a spin on it, and it curls over the line in mid-air. But all the pictures you ever see of the ball touching the ground. That doesn't- Well, it matters, but as long as it's been over the line, albeit in mid-air, that's a goal. That's why Roger Hunt didn't finish it off. He just ran to Geoff Hurst to say, "Well done. We've done it."

If there had been any doubt, Roger Hunt would not have blown the chance to score the winning goal in a World Cup Final. He'd have banged it in the back of the net.

But we could learn from that match. One or two of the players went to the referee to protest, but Uwe Seeler, their Captain, went up and pulled them away, and said, "Come on, we've got to equalise now." Now, that was the proper reaction: not to argue with the referee and linesmen, but to try to pull a goal back, which they didn't.

Then, as minutes ticked away in the extra time, I could see, looking at stopwatches, "It's going to be soon over." The ball came into our penalty area, and Bobby Moore just chested the ball down. Jack Charlton, in the words of his team mates, said, "Robert, will you please kick that ball into the stand?" or words to that effect. You can imagine Jack Charlton's language when he said that. Bobby Charlton was a superb player. He just chested the ball down, and he moved outside the penalty area.

It was then that I saw the referee put his whistle in his mouth. Then I looked down from that big gantry at Wembley, and I could see 1 or 2 people just climbing over the wall, which was only this size. They didn't run onto the pitch, actually. They didn't cross the line.

I managed to meet one fellow who did go on that excursion. I said, "Well, what happened to you?" He said, "Well, I ran into the arms of 2 burley Metropolitan Policemen." I said, "Well, did they throw you out? Did they charge you or anything?" He said, "No, they lifted me up, and one of our officers said, 'Now, we don't want naughty boys, like you, doing things like this, do we?' and they just took me back to where I'd been sitting," and they dumped him back there. He said, "The only snag is that I never saw the goal." So we gave him a video of the match.

When I saw them come over, I got a bit worried. I said, "Some people are on the pitch." I gave them their excuse: the referee with the whistle in his mouth. That's when I said, "They think it's all over." Just then, Geoff Hurst hit the ball, and I said, "It is now." I said, "Now," before the ball hit the back of the net, but it was obvious it was going to go in the back of the net. But if it had missed, there wasn't enough time to restart the game, really. They only restarted it because a goal had been scored.

But it was fabulous. The whole thing worked out, and the players were overjoyed. They'd suffered. They didn't see their homes- They were like imprisoned for 6 weeks. Nobby Styles wasn't allowed home to see his newborn baby. He was playing for England in the World Cup.

I didn't know what I'd said. I went home very early and went to bed. I didn't even watch 'Match of the Day'. With the banquet and stuff, I was too tired. But then they repeated the World Cup Final on BBC in about September, and I watched it. Then the ending came, and I thought, "Hey, that wasn't bad, was it?"

There we are. Then it grew like Topsy. Then, of course, this Director-General decided he'd have a lewd comic show, which he called 'a funny sports quiz', and pinched the whole title, and let them use it. There's nothing you can do about it, because you can't copyright a phrase. So there we are.

Interviewer: You must be very proud of it.

Kenneth: Of the saying, yes. I'm not very proud about the show that it… I don't see why they should have used those words. You could have called that show anything, couldn't you? Well, be honest. On Channel 4, they call it 'Eurotrash', don't they? So they could have called this 'Englishtrash'. But there we are.

1:38:28

Interviewer: What about Pelé?

Kenneth: He's a great man, Pelé. I saw him in 1958. He was brought on against Wales in the quarter final. The sad thing is that John Charles didn't play in that quarter final. I think if he had played for Wales, if he'd have been fit, Wales could have won the World Cup in '58. But this fellow, when he came out, he was something special. Oh dear. But many people have said, "Is he the greatest player you've ever seen?" Well, I say, "What do you mean by the greatest player? Do you mean the greatest player in any one position, or the greatest all-round player?"

Georgie Best was a superb footballer. Up front, he could score goals for you, and out on the wing. Put him in centre half, he'd

be a disaster. But John Charles was a master at centre half; a record goal scorer. When I went over with John, at the end of the season, to Italy, to see Juventus play, and to see how he's revered by the people in Turin, I knew he was very popular, but I didn't think he was that popular. They just went bananas about him.

So I think that John Charles is the greatest all-round player I've ever seen. But I've seen some great players. There are so many wonderful footballers that have come down the old riverside, and they've done their bit for the game. That's why it's the beautiful game, as long as it's played properly.

1:40:32

Interviewer: Can you just deliver that again? Because it wasn't quite clean.

Kenneth: Okay.

Interviewer: Not the whole answer; just those phrases: "There are people on the pitch. They think it's all over. It is now." I can drop it in.

Kenneth: So when I saw the people moving on the pitch, I thought, "Well-" A lot of people didn't see them come on the pitch, so I wasn't saying the obvious. I just said, "Some people are on the pitch. They think it's all over," because I thought it was all over, too. Then, "It is now." So you've got that run through: "Some people are on the pitch. They think it's all over. It is now." That was it.

[1:41:22]

END AUDIO

www.uktranscription.com