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ORAL HISTORY OF THE BBC:
ROBIN SCOTT INTERVIEWED BY FRANK GILLARD.
THIRD RECORDING SESSION. IN BROADCASTING HOUSE. 3rd February 1981

GILLARD: Now we have concluded your radio story, and so we go back once again to television. And perhaps you would tell us the circumstances of your move to BBC 2, and how you felt about it were you happy about leaving radio and so on?

SCOTT: I knew, of course, like everybody else that there were changes brewing. MacKinsey had had his people all over Broadcasting House, Television Centre and almost every other building in the BBC kingdom, and had made a number of recommendations. The most important I suppose of which was to turn the Directors of the three Directorates, Sound, Television and External into Managing Directors to make them totally responsible for administrating the delegated funds. For bringing under their control the engineering services which had been totally administered by a separate, very separate in some circumstances, Director of Engineering. To reduce the number of separate baronies and to make super barons, and to bring also finance directory under the control of the Managing Directors. It was a rationalisation in commercial terms. It was about the only commercial imprint that MacKinsey's left on the BBC. They found and this was the experience of all of us, I dealt with them in Radio in 1968 when they were there. Obviously we had long talks about the future structure of the sort of structure that I recommended for Radio and they were still there when I moved over to Television. But I'll come to that in a moment.

MacKinsey's found that Broadcasting was far too complicated for them, that unlike the factories and the distribution organisation that they had been examining the BBC was a place where they were not just two or three or even ten or twenty different products which you had to tool up for and then you could turn out X number of them and be assured of X profit. But that every single product was different and that you were dealing with people very complex problems of recruitment, training, personnel, the maintenance of standards, the problem of change within the services, the problems of ossification and so on which were quite different from the problems they'd had to face when they dealt with industry or commerce. But they did leave this very important imprint and this very radical change as it turned out to be which was to make the Directorates very separate in terms of the administration. And that of course

changed in many ways the relationship between the important outposts particularly television and to some extent Bush House, changed the relationship between those outposts and the centre, Broadcasting House.

It was in that climate that Kenneth Adam who had been Director of Television for some years did not in fact receive that either the accolade of being made Managing Director and being asked to stay on and bring the new era in, nor indeed the accolade of a Knighthood, which left him I think embittered in various ways. He wrote a series of articles in the Sunday Times and his driver would deliver them from Television Centre to the Sunday Times during the last months of his office as Director of Television and of course during that period he saw privately a number of his own executives and a number of others, including myself, and we had a long talk over lunch and I wasn't aware of what the purpose of the articles was. And I think that Kenneth really believed that he was doing the BBC a service by writing those articles. When they finally emerged after he had gone at the end of 1978, or was it the beginning... '68 or was it the beginning of '69, they caused a great furore within the BBC and he was very, he was declared very much personna non grata. And for years afterwards in fact nobody had any kind of business, professional or personal contact with Kenneth, there were exceptions to that. But he was in a sense taboo, it was a shutting out of a man who had after all rendered the BBC a singular service in many ways. It was not untypical in a way of the fashion which the corporation has indeed treated people who have left it at various times. I suppose to some extent that had been the case with Stewart Hood, to some extent it was the case with Donald Baverstock and later with Michael Peacock, a feeling that the BBC was not like other broadcasting organisations in other western societies where people could perhaps move freely around from the public sector of broadcasting to the private sector of broadcasting. There was still a remnant of that almost religious horror at those who actually had left the church, the real church, in a sense. So that when Kenneth's articles appeared there was really a furore.

Now I was.. the invitation I got from David Attenborough which was a phone call to come and have lunch with him, and we had lunch in Wigmore Street, at the Copper Grill in Wigmore Street, one of my more favourite haunts near Broadcasting House. And in fact I had not long before David had asked me to lunch there, I had in fact invited Ian Trethowan to lunch there after Ian's appointment as the new Director of Radio, then to be Managing Director Radio had been

announced and I invited Ian really as a sign of, gesture of welcome if you like, to, not to indoctrinate him at all into the ways of Broadcasting House, but to tell him what was going on and what we were about and so on. And a few weeks after that David rang me up so we had lunch there and David broke it to me that they would be looking for a new Controller BBC 2, because he, David Attenborough was to be Director of Programmes because Huw Wheldon was moving up into this new top job. That therefore the top structure would be Managing Director Huw Wheldon; Director of Programmes David Attenborough; Paul Fox staying with BBC 1 and therefore a vacancy at BBC 2.
And I was of course absolutely bowled over by the suggestion made by David that I should be a candidate for that job and that the three colleagues concerned would very much like me to be working alongside them.

And so I went forward to a Board. The Board as a matter of fact, which was the full Board of Governors, I think one of the first times that the full Board had dealt with a Controller of a network appointment. I think previously it had been possibly the job of sub-committees or in my case when I'd been appointed Chief of the Light Programme a couple of years earlier, it had been strictly a directorate appointment by Frank Gillard, Dick Marriot and Lance Thirkle, and Michael Standing. And I was on holiday in Tunisia and was summond back to this Board, and in fact flew in on I think it was a Monday, or a Tuesday, attended the Board the following morning I got the job and flew back to Tunisia, travelled back there overnight and in fact took a taxi I remember from Tunis down the coast in the hot sunshine down to, I think we were staying at Sousse, or Sfax, or somewhere like that. And walked into the swimmingpool straight from London to announce my new appointment to my wife. They were stirring and extraordinary times. I remember of course after the Board, one always forgets these things, asking, or having the then Director of Finance it was John Arkell who was Director Administration and Finance coming into my office, Radio One & Two Office and saying well of course there is the matter of the salary now, you have been getting, I can remember exactly his words, you have been getting rather below the odds. So I said thank you very much and they gave me a slight rise to move me across as Controller BBC 2.

And so I took up my appointment very rapidly because David was anxious to get settled into his new Director of Programmes post not to loose any time, so I had, which is always a good thing, a very short handover into the role of running a network. And so I learnt in a sense the hard way, sitting in what is in many ways

one of the loneliest positions in a Broadcasting organisation which is in fact taking these ultimate decisions about what or what does not go on in the network. Its something one needs to get used to. Obviously running Radio, two radio channels I'd had some experience of that. On the other hand of course the range of programmes material that a television network is dealing with, everything from news and current affairs to science subjects to, shall we say, drama which arouses doubts suspicion and moral complaint, all that requires a different kind of head on the shoulders. Or it taxes one's concentration, imagination and stretches one's perception of what the public can take, what should be done to serve the artist, to serve the creative people and what should be done in terms of the answerability of the BBC to it's public and to the nation. So that was a different task altogether. The other thing I had to get used to of course was the whole planning process of a television network, and whereas when I left television towards the end of 196.. beginning of '67, we were already beginning to think of total costing of programmes rather than just dealing with the cash, the rest well we will provide it if we can. Which was still to a large extent the situation which prevailed in radio where of course the logistical sup-port systems don't occupy that substantial percentage of the budget that they do in television. Where to wheel out an outside broadcast television unit with four cameras perhaps five, with sport services, with lights with costume people and so on, or to send a film crew off abroad all that, those operations of course entail an enormous expenditure below the line and as acompared to the cost of paying the actual artists and buying scripts and so on. Radio is in its way very much simpler or at least the kind of radio which I'd largely been dealing with, unlike Radio Three where of course the intregal costs of programmes is inevitably very much higher because of the drama and music content.

So I had to get used to understanding very rapidly particularly in the new situation which MacKinsey's had also brought about which was the total costing should be introduced. I had to get used to understanding in great detail what the kind of information that was being thrown back at me across the desk by the Chief Planners, by Joanna Spicer's support staff, dealing with the whole of the planning group and of course by Heads of Department who would also try and blind one withtheir own kind of science, or their own kind of super-art or whatever it maybe. I well remember that one of the first encounters I had, because David Attenborough had said, don't worry old boy.. don't worry about the money its the ideas that

you want to go after and I knew that David having worked as one of his producers or worked for his channel at any rate, had had in a sense more money than ideas at one time, particularly creating a new network after the initial Michael Peacock experience with BBC 2 which not by any means entirely for, because it was Michael's fault in any way, but because he was to some extent also making bricks without straw, had not got off to a very good start as we know. David had picked it up shaken it out introduced a mass of new dynamic ideas, many of which reflected his own interest and his own lifestyle, whether in music, natural history, in the arts in general, a great rennaisance mind at work on BBC 2 transforming it totally from the rather arrid serious nature that it had, into at least something which thinking people would turn and would appreciate. And gradually building up a reputation for doing drama and features extremely well and in fact better than any other network. That was a very rich legacy which I had from David Attenborough. And I had to understand perhaps more intimately than David had because of the changing financial situation, I had to apply my mind to the logistical planning side of things and to learn, as I said, fairly rapidly what these chaps were talking about and what were the meanings of these figures, below the line and above the line.

One of the first things that Joanna Spicer said to me when I got into the desk in January, in the BBC 2 desk in January 1969, was, Oh you do realise Robin, by the way I don't know whether David has told you but we do have to take a quarter of a million out of the budget and this of course was in three months of the start of a new financial year. My first. A quarter of a million pounds, when the BBC of course is dealing with hundreds of millions so it doesn't sound very much, on the other hand a network controller whether he works for the BBC or whether he is responsible for contributing programmes to the ITV network needs cash, as much cash as he can get. He knows the cost of the services below the line, but they are sort of semi-fixed and it is since it is not possible to get rid of people as if they were things that could be saved overnight, or gathered in overnight, one is concerned with the amount of cash one's got to move people around. To pay for their subsistance if they are away and obviously to buy scripts and actors and musicians and indeed to make television programmes and buy contributions. The organisation is there basically to service those contributions. Now to take quarter of a million pounds out in the '69/70 budget from BBC 2 is quite a

serious matter. I think that my cash budget then was of the order of 6-million pounds, so that in fact a quarter of a million was somewhere around 5%. But it was a pretty swingeing cut. It was in fact the beginning of the era when the BBC's finances levelled off The BBC was growing and continued to grow of course in terms of colour TV set ownership and therefore extra colour licences, continued to grow through the late '60's and right through the '70's but the amount of growth didn't match the inflation in the economy, or the rising costs of actually doing programmes better than they had been done before, which is the inevitable process of television programme making. So that from '69 onwards we were, if not on a plateau, we were gradually going downhill. And one of the ways which we used and which one of the new devices we entered into in order to compensate for that decline in the capital cash flow into the television service was to go into co-financing and co-production. And in fact one of the first co-productions was one that I was responsible for getting into which was co-financing by MCA with in fact Hallmark behind MCA. The card manufacturing giant of America. For a programme in the Hall of Fame series on NBC which was an adaptation of Gallico's the Snow Goose. And which we got Patrick Garland to direct and it starred Jenny Agutter and so on. And that was a real co-production of a kind which in fact we very rarely did thereafter, where you've got the American co-producer breathing down the neck of the English Director in this case Patrick Garland. It won many prizes and it taught me a lot of lessons in the sense that, I recognised that it was valuable to have vast injections of cash, but that never again should one impose upon one's director the kind of strains and stresses that are imposed in American television on directors who have the advertising man, the network producer and the production company and possibly the agent and manager of the stars involved, all breathing down his neck, or sitting at the back of the gallery, or the film set, if he's directing it and saying no I think we'd rather he do that again, and so on. So I learnt that lesson which was very salutory indeed. And we had to build up the co-production, co-financing injection to compensate for that loss of finance, and for the increasing sophistication of television production over the following years.

I think it is worth saying something about the nature of the planning process and also about the atmosphere in which I worked and sort of atmosphere that I found on the 6th floor of Television Centre, the big decision taking floor, which of course when one has been a producer seen from afar seems to be a curious

place inhabited by these supermen who have this enormous power of decision over what you shall and shall not do. The power of yes and no. The Controller of a network working for the BBC, and indeed elsewhere, basically has the power of yes and no. He has the power to mould, he has the power to make quite drastic changes particularly in scheduling his network, and indeed to some extent in the content of the network. I say to some extent because it has got to be a gradual process. The whole BBC system where unlike almost all other broadcasting organisations, it's one of its strengths and one of its weaknesses, possibly only NHK of Japan is similar in this respect, where you own and operate the system and own and operate the means of production which supplies most of the programmes that system, and where in fact very rapidly once a programme series has become established it is very difficult to move it a different programme slot, and even more difficult to get rid of it or to change it's nature. Most of the changes are by a process of osmosis. The changes that are radical are always very painful and they need a great deal of preparation and planning to bring about, and I'd had some experience in Radio in killing programmes off but found that it was very much more difficult in television. David Attenborough's legacy was a very rich one, but he had left BBC 2 with a slightly too strong a mixture of serious programming. There were at least two programmes of what you might call specialist series, serious nature, too many to support the right kind of mix.

The network was still suffering from the feeling that it was a bit too serious that there wasn't enough lightheartedness and there wasn't enough good comedy and so on. We had, David had had a shot with good comedy and some of them had come off. The Pete and Dud, shows had been very successful. The import of shows like Rowan and Martin from America had done extremely well, and what I set out to do building on what he had left was to try and place, a) create more programmes of entertainment so that the mixture was a little bit lighter without destroying the spirit of the network, and making those programmes if possible the best of their kind and at the same time placing them in such a way that one took the greatest possible advantage of the complimentality factor between BBC 1 and BBC 2. And that is a skill of its own in chasing the, what are known as the soft-options. Meaning the places where you can pick up the most audience. And that maybe the most audience for a light programme or it may mean the biggest audience for a serious programme. It is just that if in fact you have three choices as people had from 1964 onwards with the arrival of BBC 2, if you have

three choices then you are either if you are a person who wants entertainment from television, going to go for one or other of the entertainment programmes, and therefore miss the other one, or if you are a serious person, the argument is you will go for the serious programme but then you will be torn in two if there are two serious programmes on together.

In fact of course it doesn't necessarily happen that way, but the easy way of exploiting the so called soft-option is of course always if you are planning BBC 2 to put a light programme opposite a serious one on BBC 1. David Attenborough had already put a western on Monday's opposite Panorama and got a very big audience for BBC 2 that way and I continued that, there was no point in not doing it, and I put my programmes after that, big surge of audience on Monday evenings I placed programmes like Horizon and perhaps had a comedy programme after it in order to carry that audience through to Horizon, which thereby gained very large audiences. He had also placed the Hollywood musical opposite the Wednesday play, something which made Sydney Newman who was running drama in those days and had come over from Armchair Theatre at ABC absolutely mad because the announcer on BBC 1 would say and now on BBC 2 the Hollywood Musical starring Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire and on BBC 1 the Wednesday Play, and everybody sort of groaned and switched over to 2. Or at least that's what Sydney said.

The relationship between the two networks which I had experienced because running BBC 1 presentation and working for Michael Peacock in '66 I had very quickly been indoctrinated into the attitude that what mattered only was what was on BBC 1, and BBC 1 was competing with ITV it was the lead channel of the BBC and the BBC 2 was following and doing its own job yes splendidly old boy but we are here to beat the opposition and we must hit it hard and tell the customers what's coming up on BBC 1 and don't overdo the BBC 2 stuff. Even though David Attenborough was in the next office to Michael he and Rowan Ayers, all the close group that worked round David were very very separate indeed and I don't think that there was quite the same closeness and there was, obviously David had helped to bring it about but the kind of close raport that I established with Paul Fox between 1969 until he left I think it was in '72, was a very very happy period as far as I think both of us were concerned and whilst I know it did the dirty, as it were, on BBC 1 and he never did the dirty on me and I had very often to do acrobatics at the last minute in order to adjust to his late changes, it was a very good relationship and I think one that paid off in terms of viewer-

ship and so on. One could of course, as I experienced, carry the business of exploiting the complimentality and the soft-option a bit too far. It emerged when after the great success of the Six Wives of Henry 8th, the two major things which I inherited from David and which started my first financial year in '69/70 were of course the Six Wives of Henry 8th, and Civilisation. And they were marvellous things to inherit. The Six Wives because of its success I immediately said to Gerald Savory, we must follow that with something, there is only one thing we can follow it with and that's Elizabeth R. And Gerald said, yes great, one of the few occasions where a Controller in effect says now that's what I want next. On the other hand if Gerald had said no, no way do we want to do Elizabeth R because we feel we've had enough of Elizabethan drama with the Six Wives, I probably wouldn't have got Elizabeth R. You can't actually force an idea onto a programme department, it is very dangerous to do it, you've got to have the full co-operation of the programme people and it's the only way that that particular system works.

Gerald Savory was Head of Drama Plays, and he had to therefore take the decision once the idea had been sold to him in a sense, and I decided that I would release a repeat of the Six Wives of Henry 8th to Paul Fox on BBC 1 and plan it in such a way that the second success as it were of the Six Wives on BBC 1 would be followed immediately by the first showing of Elizabeth R on BBC 2. In fact the Wednesday night after the Saturday showing of the Six Wives, I think, on BBC 1. So that it was possible to say at the end of the last one on BBC 1, and coming up is the sequel to all this, as it were, on BBC 2 starting next Wednesday night. And I had put for the first episode I placed the first episode on Wednesday night and I thought it was a perfectly good alternative to Sportsnight and it so happened that Sportsnight on that particular Wednesday night had one of those league evening games or cup games which of course were going to be inevitably sought out by the male members or the football loving members of the family, whereas the females of the family were going to go for Elizabeth R. But when I did the plan I did not know at that time that that a very important football match was going to be screened on the Wednesday night. So that when Elizabeth R actually with all this publicity got onto the screen the phone started screaming and people saying how dare you place two very important programmes opposite each other, sport on one and this exciting new drama series on BBC 2. You've split the family down the middle. Now I was criticised for that and to

some extent rightly, although in fact what had happened was we had succeeded in generating just the kind of enthusiasm for BBC 2 which was required to bring more viewers to the sort of programming that BBC 2 did best. And the result of it was in fact that I had to immediately introduce the repeat during the week for Elizabeth R in order that all the family could have the opportunity to see it. So in the end it didn't do any harm, but it's an example of how you can actually go too far with this complimentality business in playing one off against the other.

I've mentioned the offers process by saying that one had to get used to the meaning of the logistical hieroglyphics on pieces of paper and of course one depended to an enormous extent on ones planners and finance advisors and so on. Controller of BBC network has no staff to speak of, although he has certain, he has planners, all right they work for him, basically he has his own secretarial support staff. He has no HQ staff in the way that for instance the German networks do, or the French networks. And he relies on the same sort of people as does the other Controller in the case of BBC Television. And yet of course within the Departments working for the Service overall as a whole there are groups of people who are concerned only with making programmes for a particular network. And may never do programmes for another network. This was the case for quite a sizable proportion of the features group which had been built up and marvellously built up in a most thrusting and purposeful way by Aubrey Singer, whom I've known as an outside broadcast producer colleague and then he'd gone to America and come back and had set about building up the Science and Features Department to start off with working within the outside broadcast group under Peter Dimmock, and then splitting away with the start of BBC 2 and his own response to an invitation which was general to the service as a whole to make programmes for the new BBC 2. And it was the Features Group responded and Aubrey personally with the most enthusiasm and the most eclat, the most and indeed with the best results in many ways. And Aubrey's empire grew and grew and grew during the middle '60's and by the time I came back to BBC 2 in 1970, 1969, it was a very big empire indeed and he was a very important baron, he had been very put out at not getting the job of controller BBC 2, he had in fact been Boarded and I had been chosen in preference. And I am absolutely sure that the, one of the principle reasons for that was that a) Huw Wheldon wanted me back in the Television Service and that b) both David Attenborough and Paul Fox wanted me in what Huw Wheldon called his 'Troika'. Rather than Aubrey whom they found a prickly person and they thought would

be difficult to get on with. But Aubrey's empire was a very important one it produced great ideas for BBC 2 and it produced a number of very very important programmes. It also meant, of course, that one had to be not very ready to say no, but capable of saying no to Aubrey and his chaps, whenever it was, whenever one felt it was necessary to say no. And there were some ideas which obviously weren't viable and one had to say no to them. On the other hand out of that stable came then Alistair Cooke's America, came out of Stephen Hurst's bit of the Features Group. The Science series Horizon was very strong and Bob Reid and under his successors. Very very good producers and editors were recruited a number of them, people with very high qualifications, who had very serious regard for the content subject matter of what they were doing.

After America in fact, one of the.. we reckoned that we would have always one major series in the making or that we would try and have an overlap so that there was not too big a gap between the end of one major series and the start of the next. And in fact I agreed to the America series because it was an obvious one, and the next one after that was the Bronowsky Ascent of Man, which Aubrey was very very keen on. I had some initial doubts about it because I wasn't sure that Bruno, Bronowsky could in fact sustain that period of time on the screen, 13 episodes and so on. I was aware also that some of his theories about science were not universally respected amongst his scientific colleagues. Not that he was a charlatan but there were certain things and you know what scientists are, eyebrows were raised occasionally, and that to have Bruno as the apostle and the preacher of science would have been a mistake. But of course what he did was to preach in a sense his own philosophy, his theology in a sense, and he was as moving as can be in his recollection of the problems that Jewish people and that extraordinary episode which finishes in Auschwitz, as he was in bringing to life and giving people to understand through his own perception, his own enthusiasm, the process of evolution and what he considered to be the value of man and what man had brought to the earth, in terms of his civilisation and his outlook, and his scientific knowledge and so on. And Bruno's series I think The Ascent of Man was probably the greatest kind of feature jewel in the crown of BBC 2 during my years there.

But there were a number of other series from other departments not least the documentary department, and there were certain producers whom I obviously encouraged and it wasn't a question

of having one's favourites, but there are certain people who come out of the pack and whom one recognises has got a special talent so that when the offers process comes along with the Heads of Departments saying here is our bag of tricks which ones do you want to have, in your mix for next years production and schedule there were obviously certain producers suggestions or the fact that certain producers were associated with ideas which made them, made one favour them because one was after a certain type of excellence. And one wanted to avoid shallowness and just gimmickry and sophistication of production and go for obviously the best possible presented content, and people of that kind were of course Chris Ralling, and Chris did Search for the Nile for me, and then went on to do considerably later on the Fight Against Slavery. And then had laid in a sense the foundations for the one after that which was the Darwin story, the Beagle Story, and Chris's legacy to BBC 2, Chris Rallings legacy to BBC was also a very very substantial one.

And I suppose I was spending the money of the network and getting co-production in the most rich, and Huw Wheldon thought it was a bit extravagant at times, on Drama. I favoured drama plays, we had some very very distinguished runs of plays after the historical series. And some very important single plays. And drama serials. Obviously the Pallisers was one of the major series which I launched in '72, I think it was. And that was followed of course by War & Peace. And these were very very big productions where in fact one is committing a substantial chunk of the network money in what can, if it goes wrong, become irresponsible patronage. And where you have in fact got to be extraordinarily careful that you don't actually make a major mistake and I suppose I was lucky in not making a major mistake of that kind during my tenure of office. Although one of the last series which I encouraged was the Explorers which turned out to be very expensive indeed, done with enormous production values, and shot on film overseas. And turning out to be very costly because of the number of people that one had to move around the earth literally. In fact in the end we were forced to cut back on the numbers of programmes in the Explorers series and could not do the original planned 13. Huw Wheldon and David Attenborough were keen that I should cut back to 6 but we managed in the end I think to keep the thing down to about 10. Which in America was called Ten Who Dared. And the series turned out in the end to be financially viable, sold very well and so on. But it was a crisis occasion which happened in '72. The Offers Process involved the giants, the barons of

the television production departments, the Sean Sutton's, Gerald Savoury's and the like, along with Tom Sloane, Head of Light Entertainment Group, they were the group leaders, commanding these big production factories of entertainment and drama, coming with their Heads of Department, Sloane coming with Bill Cotton, and Michael Mills, and.. Sean Sutton with Gerald Savoury and the serials chaps, and then Aubrey coming with Bob Reid of the science side and Stephen Hurst in the arts side, and Wilcox, Man Alive and Gordon Watkins and others, and Chris Brasher who ran General Features for a while. And then you had the lesser battalions the music one under John Culshaw, because Humphrey Burton of course had gone to work with London Weekend Television, and then set up Aquarius very successfully. And the smaller groups, Documentaries which one could turn to for these very exciting series and the Departments like Religion and Children's programmes which didn't contribute very much to BBC 2, but contributed a lot to BBC 1. And the complexity of the planning, the excitement of a new programming, the response of the public the success of moving things around, all that was terribly exciting.

I think that one of the things I had to face up to was of course killing certain programmes. Programmes like Wheelbase that had gone on for too long. And a number of others, Europa, which gradually went out of the schedules and replaced by something else. I wanted to bring in and strengthen series like Foreign Film series. I wanted to bring in one or two more American imports without doing too much. That gradually started to pay off in terms of a slight increase in the audience levels, and I wanted some really big entertainment shows, and of course Morecombe and Wise came back to BBC 2 and had enormous success first on BBC 2 the Two Ronnies the same way. Eventually moving across to BBC 1 and people say why do you have to give these things up to the 'big brother' network. And the answer was well you know there is something else coming up behind and there almost always was, and as my successors have found one comedy show goes across to BBC 1 and before you can say knife there is Fawlty Towers, there is Not the Nine O'Clock News, and so on. And coming up filling the spaces on BBC 2 are the new shows with the new comedians and the new writers.

The atmosphere in this, in the heirarchy of BBC Television was very happy one. Huw Wheldon who is a marvellous Welsh leader of people and I suppose in many ways looks back on his own career in the Army as one of the happiest times in his life, of course he was a brilliant soldier and great leader of men, and very

much the over-the-top kind of outlook on things. What he used to call the 'bullshit' stakesman would have, the Annan Committee ferreting around the Television Service and he would say well show him this and show him that that will be all right old boy, ah ha, you know. And of course it wasn't always the case. And the his and his gift of the gab vis a vis the Board of Governors and then vis a vis the Annan Committee did sometimes produce an adverse effect and of course the Board, a number of members of the Board in the end couldn't cope with Huw because his grasp of the logistics as Managing Director were not always totally sound. He did tend to think that sometimes, that his command of language and his gift equally for making people laugh could divert attention away from serious consideration. And of course he was also rather contemptuous of those who had not got the same professional background that he had got, or had achieved what he had himself personally achieved as a producer, as a leader of programme department, leader of service, and a presenter of programmes. A man of extraordinary substance who didn't always conceal his irritation with those, including the Director General, Charles Curran, who had no experience of this extraordinary television thing, this mixture of show business public service, and everything you can name. So that when Charles Curran visited us, as he did eventually I think it was Friday morning he would always come down, it was not always a very open discussion I felt, that he had with the ..

Charles Curran, did not, of course, have that background knowledge of the Television Service, nor actually did Hugh Greene. Hugh had had his favourites of the programmes that he had encouraged in the Television Service, breaking new ground, getting rid of the shiboleth, all that kind of thing, getting rid of some of the taboos or at least he thought he was getting rid of some of the taboos to some extent of course he strengthened those taboos, or he brought those taboos out in the open and they had to declare their shape, form, and justify themselves, which in many cases they did, subsequently. And I'm referring of course to Mrs Whitehouse who is now very much a respected establishment figure, I think, and who has perhaps survived those particular quarrels in some respects better than the BBC. I don't know where the moral of that lies. But Charles whom I deeply liked, I was going to say loved, I think it was difficult to love Charles but I had great affection for him, we got on extremely well personally. And I was deeply affected by his death, or his departure from the BBC and then his death after a couple of

years or so with Visnews. But he sat a little uneasily in the Director General office on the 6th floor, next to Huw Wheldon's. And our Friday morning meetings I felt tended to skim the surface a bit. It was a question sometimes of looking for subjects to talk about, and they tended to be the subjects which concerned the Board or were likely to concern the Board rather than programme output as a whole. I suppose that was perfectly understandable and Huw was rather reluctant to put forward too much to Charles. He wanted to keep within the Television Service, and I think at times he took that he overdid the business of delegating the money for the Television Service and we'll get on with it sort of philosophy, and there were one or two cause celebre which occurred which probably shouldn't have occurred and I'm not talking about Yesterdays Men which of course preceded my arrival, but there were one or two others and David Attenborough himself who didn't like going to the Board of Governors when he had been made director of Programmes he had been given a seat on the Board and..

GILLARD: We are restarting here because there are a couple of points which Mr Scott wants to correct.

SCOTT: Yes I think probably that this isolation of the Television Service, possibly the feeling that it was not getting as much money as it should get, the economy was beginning to press on it and so on, and the feeling of separateness from Broadcasting House the fact that Charles Hill was Chairman and tended to interfere a bit more than any Chairman previously. The fact possibly that Charles Curran was not a television person, had no television background. It can be said also of Hugh Greene but he had played a very direct part in a number of the programme developments of the 60's in television, and the fact that Huw Wheldon wanted to keep things a bit within the television service and perhaps didn't always know what was going on, did lead to certain errors and misunderstandings with the Board. There were certain programmes like for instance the Casanova series which was on BBC 2 and was an enormous not only cause celebre, it was an enormous audience puller as it happens. I mean I think it was a flawed work quite apart from the naked ladies, not one of Dennis Potter's greatest works, but I do actually think it was a considerable achievement Casanova in other respects and when I got Mark Shivas and Dennis Potter to, on its second run, to re-edit it completely to reduce it in length to take out a lot of those flashback scenes and to some extent reduce the nudity it was a

much better series altogether. But it caused a lot of fluttering in the dove cote of the Board of Governors. Now David Attenborough had been when he was made Director of Programmes, had been given a seat on the Board of Management, so that the television service had in effect two seats on the Board of Management. It didn't survive beyond David and it didn't survive into the period when Alasdair was Director of Programmes, or indeed I, when I became Deputy Managing Director, although of course one stood in for the boss when he was away. But David didn't really like either the Board of Management sessions, Huw Wheldon didn't have very great regard for the value of the Board of Management, he saw it as a kind of, I suppose a sort of monitoring, a weekly monitoring thing getting together with one's colleagues, but he didn't feel very much at home there I don't think. David was irritated by it, of course the Board of Management is not a decision taking body., most of the time And David Attenborough also found his contacts with the Board of Governors very irksome and the increasing interference of the Board of Governors in television matters encouraged possibly by things like failing to point out that such and such a programme series was coming up which would cause offence, or in due course failing to point out the dangers represented by Yesterday's Men for instance. That kind of thing increased the suspicion of the Board of Governors the Television Service was far too much a world of its own, and led of course later on to suggestions in the Government White Paper following the Annan Committee report that there should be some kind of watchdog system of committees of outside people who would look into the editorial process much more deeply. And I believe that that was a symptom of the BBC's growth and the BBC had and still does to a very large extent give enormous amount of power and devolve a great deal of responsibility to its editors and producers, and it is a system that works when it works. And when it doesn't work it causes a great deal of, not worry and concern, and occasionally one would get problems. Those problems would go all the way from Yesterday's Men to the Carigmore incident and they are not in themselves shall we say major disasters in programme terms, they are not examples of lesemajesty or anything of that kind, but they indicate to those in power that the BBC does really, or pretends really to be a separate voice a fourth estate, and it has no right to that, and that if you go right back in the history of the BBC and its relations to the Government it is probable that the BBC was never recognised as an independent decision making editorialising body in the way that occasionally it appeared to be from I suppose

the late 60's onwards. That even in the days of Baldwin there was no suggestion that the BBC should be a current affairs producing organisation like a newspaper with a front page and so on, and it is that problem that lies behind the BBC's lateness to get into the news gathering field, its lateness to get into the investigative journalism field and its problems vis a vis government in all these sensitive areas.

And during the early '70's, the Television Service was struggling to hang onto the previous state of affairs where it had been life had been all cosy it had been left on its own, it had had a Director General who had supported its lifting of its skirts up a bit and its kicking over the traces in That Was The Week That Was era and so on. And was finding it difficult to adjust to new circumstances. David Attenborough himself was a bit of a Boy Scout in this world, didn't at all like the Governors trying to influence the content of programmes. There was one famous row which went on for months and months which stemmed from Jackson, who was the Post Office chap on the Board, the Union man as it were, on the Board. And Tom Jackson wanted us to do an industry programme, and there was great concern being expressed about we are not doing enough about industry and so on, probably very rightly. And David Attenborough who spoke for Television Programmes to the Board of Governors usually at sessions which occupied a very small percentage of the Governors time on Thursdays and usually crammed in that sort of last half hour whilst everybody is saying when are we getting to lunch, sort of quarter to one, quarter past one. Had to cope with Tom Jackson and played the traditional role of the Director of a service, vis a vis his close colleagues which was to act as a barrier between the Governors and the executive instrument, broadcasting and he at all costs wanted to avoid Governors actually imposing programme ideas. And in the end he lost out actually and I was actually instructed in the end to turn the Money Programme into a different sort of programme which would involve industry and deal with trade union problems and so on and we were forced to change its title and to some extent its content and I called it Money at Work. And it was Called Money At Work for a year or two and then Tom Jackson went and it went back to being the Money Programme. And we did other types of industrial programmes because chaps like Mike Blakstad got in the act and did very good industry programmes for BBC 1. But it was an example of the kind of interference which of course doesn't work, you cannot actually dictate programme content you've got to have a response from your programme makers. Whose eyes also start to light up and say

yes yes what a great idea and then adopt it as their own. And that of course is the real role of the network controller, the editor of a service whatever it maybe is to feed, suggest ideas, that might work, get a response, get an enthusiastic response to something that he perhaps has suggested and then never have it recognised afterwards that it was his idea, no no, once it passes to the producer it is his only. And that is terribly important.

And David in the end of course in spite of the pleasantness of the atmosphere in the Television Service amongst us he was very good at contact particularly with Paul and myself, what Huw Wheldon called his Troika, David, Paul Fox, and myself. We would meet with David at least I was going to say four mornings a week, certainly on Monday mornings to chew over the weekend. We would have Management meeting in any case on Tuesday. Wednesday morning would be programme review where we would, this very important meeting in the Television Service, chewing the cud, freely speaking amongst all the Heads of Departments about the programmes of the week before. Thursday we'd have a meeting which would go on usually for longer where we would look ahead and so on, and we'd have perhaps the editor of News and Current affairs, Desmond Taylor in to chew things over with him, and Friday the Director General would attend, so that every morning there would be some time with the Director of Programmes, and on two mornings at least Tuesday and on Friday with the Managing Director as well. So it was a very close knit little group at the top. And that was served by people like Joanna Spicer, running the Planning Group right up until 1974, and S.G. Williams who was there also until about that time looking after the administrative side of the place and acting as the eminence grise and the guider and mentor on policy matters, a whole range of policy matters. But what was happening of course was the pressure was developing not only from the interference of the Board of Governors not only from jealousies between Broadcasting House and Television Centre, not only from pressures of the economy and pressures of budget, but also personal pressures on those in control. And these were actually perfectly straight forward salary problems with the salaries in the independent private sector and in ITV companies forging ahead on the executive side, there being obviously quite a shortage of people who would take on senior responsibility and yet the salaries of Huw Wheldon, David Attenborough, that Paul Fox and myself were really very low as compared with our colleagues in ITV. And as we went into that series of freezes in the 70's it made actually quite a, and made quite a moral problem and I am

perfectly certain because Paul Fox and I went to see Huw Wheldon about it more than once, and Huw said, I can't do anything about that, that's a matter for the Governors, but he didn't push it. And Charles Curran himself held down the senior salaries from above in the kind of family hold back policy which was actually in the end very bad indeed for the moral of the senior staff. Because if you can't seem to encourage your senior staff you are holding the whole machine down artificially in check from the top and eventually the cauldron will burst open and in the way it burst open was of course in people leaving. And it is perfectly straight forward, Paul Fox left for reasons of finance, and David Attenborough left for reasons of policy because he didn't like that sort of life style any more. And that is why he decided to use his good working years that are left to do the marvellous series that he went on to do.

GILLARD: Oral History of the BBC Mr Robin Scott's contribution and it is the third session, tape five.

SCOTT: So the pressures were actually very great I think, we were all working, I'm sure, much too hard during those early 70's and I'm sure that there's a lot of people still work much too hard, and perhaps I should say later something about the relationship between this kind of total involvement and dedication to an organisation like the BBC and the new professionalism. I am not by any means convinced actually as has been written by Burns in his book that radical change actually altered the working of the BBC and the style of working in the BBC. I think that actually what happened was that people in the BBC became more professional and inevitably more professional, and that the remnants of amateurism particularly in the Television Service couldn't survive particularly in the face of competition. And of course competition introduced an alternative employer in the form of the ITV companies, but there was still an enormous amount of allegiance and devotion to the BBC as a body. And I think that was erroded by, partly by the wage and salary problem anyway vis a vis the competitor it was also eroded from within by the introduction of the conditions of service in 1969 which meant that film crews for instance and others started to get overtime and considerable payments for time not taken off and so on, whereas previously they had no doubt been overexploited. But it meant that as between the production people, the people with the ideas, the people who were obviously going to derive enormous personal

satisfaction from carrying out their ideas, getting their names on the screen and signing their work, could no longer exploit in quite the indescriminate way that they had before and certain cases, those who were actually helping them to paint that canvas or to actually put that useable work in and create a score which is the sort of television process. And that meant that there were, there grew up within the Service a feeling that Jack was getting more than I undeservedly and therefore cared less which wasn't the case about the product and so on and that is not by any means yet I speak in the beginning of 1981, there is now some progress towards sorting that out. But it is a very very big question indeed as to how you do award people in professional terms whilst maintaining the homage flealty and the value of the team working for a service as a whole, and for the BBC thing which after all derives its strength from the quality of the product and the content and the varied nature of different sorts of productions. So there was that background in the early 70's. There were grumbling union problems and there were there was a particular problem which Huw Wheldon didn't understand I think which was related to what I've been saying, where the production assistants in Drama those who actually helped the director or producer to set the show up and those who deal with the nitty-gritty of arrangements and so on, and who are on fairly low grades MP2 as compared to producers MP5/6 and specials above, where they, a number of them had stayed where they were in that position as PA's including some very old timers for many many years and had not gone up the ladder. And yet they were being worked harder and harder under an increasingly sophisticated style of drama making and light entertainment programme making. And pressure was increasing on them in terms of their time a lot of them were not getting any time off and so on, and they in the end seeing their colleagues whom they were most closely related to the film people and the show workers and all the rest of them getting these extra payments in the end said, well we don't really want to be junior officers, we'd rather be in the Seargents mess along with those chaps, you know we'll take the pip off our shoulders and give us two or three stripes and we'll be much happier, much more fun and we'd get much more money.
And the Television Service and Huw in particular said no these chaps are junior officers, I mean no way can they skip over to the Seargent's mess because there is more jam there, they must stay and they must be offered promotion if they want it. No they said, we don't want promotion we like what we are doing it's just that we don't get enough reward for it. And we are being pushed too hard.
So of course in the end they struck and it was a very sad strike

because one saw a number of ones closest friends, producer colleagues senior people in drama and light entertainment on with the pickets on the gate at the front of Television Centre and although that didn't happen I think until 1974 after I had left BBC 2 it was very saddening because it was the first example of a split in the production ranks. And it took a long time for those wounds to heal.

So there were these problems behind what we were doing there were these aggravations building up.

I'd like to come back to programmes. To talk about Late Night Line Up which was, which had been a great strength in the BBC'2's output in the early years, pioneered by Rowan Ayers, who was a great figure in BBC 2 a man of enormous output of new creative ideas and a great companion in many ways. Not actually a very good producer. He didn't have actually a very tight reign on his people there was far too much indulgence items were run much too long, and so on. The Line Up was at it's best when it obviously had a subject it could get it's teeth into when it was discussing a programme and so on but it was at its worst when it didn't know when to shut up it didn't know when to stop an interview and so on. And I had had a lot of trouble in the placing and timing and facilities for the news, and when Derek Amoore took over the news Television News I think in '71 or thereabouts, and when Paul Fox went for a 25 minute news on BBC1 the strains began to be felt in the logistics of the news operation. And I had had the news at 7:30 to 8, inherited from David Attenborough and Derek said we can't sustain the news at 7:30 to 8 because we can't do a big news operation there and then do another one at 9 o'clock for Paul Fox because at the time when the 7:30 news on BBC 2, the half hour news had come into being there was only 10 minutes news, it was 8:50 to 9 o'clock very short mid-evening news on One. And I said to Derek well what is the solution. He said, well I don't know what the solution is. I said, well maybe the solution is to move the news to late evening rather in the same position as News Night is in fact now on BBC 2, but to change its nature. I said, if I put you in the evening you will have the opportunity to bring in satelites from America, you can talk about tomorrow mornings press, you can talk about the arts and so on, I want a different style of news magazine. And I knew that this gave me not only the opportunity but it almost forced me into killing Late Night Line Up. And Rowan had just started the Access programmes Open Door which I'll come onto in a moment, and he was pretty involved with that, there were a lot of ideas bubbling around for late evening shows. I had got personally a bit tired of Line Up even though for many people it was a wonderful thing to find at the

end of the evening and one or two of the people involved I think got bored with it themselves and so I decided in effect to kill Line Up, and to put the news in at late evening.

Of course the move didn't work entirely well for two reasons, first because there was some public reaction against the killing of Line Up although it was smoothed over and all the people involved were found other things and went on in fact to do better and more interesting work. But the news didn't work at all and I had to express considerable disappointment to Derek because in effect what we got was just a news transferred to late evening none of that extra excitement and injection of new material which I had asked for. And it in a sense taught me a lesson that actually news people with their own indoctrination and background coming out in provincial newspapers assimilating news values over the years which are press, printed press news values which they carried on into radio and to television, find it very difficult if not impossible to do a different kind of programme. It was the problem that Gerry Mansell had with the World At One and which he had solved by having a summary and then bringing in a strong personality like Bill Hardcastle backed by a very good editor in the person of Brian Bliss.. no.. Andrew Boyle sorry. the person of Andrew Boyle, and that had been a very very strong authoritive responsible team that transformed radio news and current affairs broadcasting. And the Television Service found itself incapable of doing the same thing, and is actually still incapable of doing it and I speak advisedly even in '81 because NewsNight doesn't actually solve that problem. And so that was the disappointment there. Relationship with news was friendly but of course the unlike the other Departments, Groups, Baronies, in the BBC as a whole the News reported, although its budget was to a large extent the delegated budget, to a large extent not entirely of the Managing Director's it had its own reporting chain up to the editor of News and Current affairs or the Chief Assistant to the Director General, and to the Director General himself. And it was a line of reporting which was not appreciated by those down in Bush House and I think never appreciated by Gerry Mansell who found it quite easy in Bush House terms to censure when he was acting Director General with the Carigmore CARRICKMORE incident in 1979 to 80. Quite easy to censure the management of the Television Service not appreciating that in fact the editorial chain of command is a very complex one within the BBC and stems from the retention by the Director General of that final editorial responsibility down through his Director

of News and Current affairs or as he was in the early 70's his Editor and particularly Desmond Taylor. Now Desmond worked very closely with Paul and with me, but there were times in the early 70's when in fact he was called upon by the Governors and by Charles Curran to take a much closer grip on things. And one of the things that he was asked to take a closer grip on was of course the new access programming Open Door.

Now the idea of Open Door actually was an American one it came out of WGBH Boston, one of the public broadcasting stations, one of the bigger and brighter stations in public broadcasting in America, and Frank Gillard, my old Radio boss had written an article in the Listener called Catch 44 which recounted very graphically what went on with this new opportunity for people to come in and do their own thing, put their point of view across and so on, a real kind of Hyde Park, not Hyde Park Corner but Marble Arch speakers corner of the air. And David Attenborough said to me one morning we were meeting, have you seen Frank's article in the Listener I wonder if there is anything in that for us. And he sent Rowan Ayers actually to take a look at it and it was the time when Line Up was breaking, about to stop in effect. And Rowan came back very enthusiastic saying yes we should start something of this kind. And actually David and Rowan and I set up the rules and then Charles Curran touched them up and David and I took them to the Board of Governors. And the rules we knew what the dangers were that if political parties of course have access to political time if they have a certain number of candidates at elections and so on, political parties on the fringe don't have access to that kind of Party political broadcasting and therefore they will want to get into Open Door even as it were round the back. There were racial discrimination problems and things like that in the sense that peo ple would be upset either if there was the fascist kind of stuff or if there was very violently pro black or pro brown or pro yellow talk. So we knew we were on dangerous ground and the ground rules were that Desmond Taylor and David Attenborough and I would always sort out with Rowan Ayers what the programmes would be. And we fairly soon ran into trouble because politicians objected to certain things, we had to sort of semi give right of reply on one occasion when the rights of old aged pensioners were being paraded, but this was the part and parcel of the thing, there was bound to be that sort of trouble and the important thing was that the Editor of News and Current Affairs and the television service should be totally behind what was happening make it perfectly plain that this was an open

forum and not the editorial policy of the service.

I think the important thing about Open Door, the weekly access programme on BBC 2 was the way in fact the BBC threw in its own facilities and support staff and that the teams that Rowan Ayers built up and then Paul Bonner and Mike Fentiman, were totally dedicated to in effect making people articulate and bringing out of people the message that they wanted to get across in helping them to deliver it. Unlike the Access programmes in America where you know, let it all hang out and you get a boring programme and so on. A lot of the Access programmes in fact attracted enormous response and did a lot of good. A lot of good in advising people how to deal with problems in various ways, open their minds and their eyes to effects in society. A lot of that, of course, was going on in programmes like Man Alive, there was a lot of preaching, I mean there is a trend that one has to watch out for for too much missionary zeal and too much preaching and do-gooding in various ways that can emerge from departments, producers who were doing general feature programmes and so on. And at times programmes like Man Alive, although they were also supremely good at times, marvellous programmes. Programmes like Gayle is Dead about the drug problem and a number of others. Programmes made by people like Tony Barraclough and first class documentaries and lovely single documentaries of all kinds that were being made for BBC 2 and indeed BBC 1.

One major documentary which I in fact imported which was brought to me originally by Gunner Rugheimer in his early first year I think as head of Purchasing after Gordon Smith had gone, was a programme called The Sorrow and the Pity, made in France by an independent group of producers made by Andre Harris and Marcel Ophuls and which I saw and being with my background, my French background immediately appreciated this was a fascinating programme. Long as it was, some of the interviews were too long and it was opinionated programme to some extent, but it was clearly a programme that we had to have, but a programme that also I personally had to stand by because I would, I was very well known to French colleagues in French broadcasting and I went so far as to introduce the programme myself which was a little bit unusual to actually put myself in camera in front of the programme, to put it in its perspective. And I think that was a valuable thing to have done and then to follow it with a full scale debate bringing over from France characters like Jacques Soustelle and so on, and of course had been involved with the events of the war and the events in London and Algeria and so on. So that something which Huw Wheldon said, I hope we are not going to have

trouble with your damned French programme are we. I mean there was a bit of concern in the end of course it became a great success. And they did a number of other things like French Soirees on BBC 2 and exchange programmes with the continent and so on. Which I think in their way were valuable and obviously buying such programmes as Les which were very well received by the BBC 2 audience, with a kind of opening up to the world outside which was necessary in a Service which had tended to take almost all its production from within, and tended to be a little bit inward looking overall. So that I think was something which I am pleased to have done.

When I left, finally left the BBC 2 early in May '74 actually and Huw had said, look eventually we'll have to have a change, Huw Wheldon, and it wasn't quite clear what I think what he wanted me to be, he wanted me to be the senior controller in the Service, there had been departures, Paul Fox had gone, David Attenborough had gone, Alasdair Milne had been brought in from being Controller for Scotland where of course he was one of the contributing people to BBC 2, to be the Director of Programmes the number two. And Huw wanted a third senior person to replace S.G. Williams who had gone to replace Joanna Spicer who was going, and also to set about managing the service particularly with two new controllers as there would be of BBC 1 and BBC 2. And for a time I actually with Alasdair because we had no BBC 1 controller because in fact after the departure of Paul Fox Alasdair ran BBC 1 for a while and I was still running BBC 2. I'm talking about '73 here, and in fact planned with him both networks for a while because he was a total newcomer to this thing and actually introduced a number of things on to BBC 1 which have since survived, like the Monday 9:25 film and so on. Things that I put in at the time to stem the possible drift away from BBC 1 which can happen when Controllers change and so on. So that I was to have a new role which Huw called Controller Development, which of course was a title immediately misunderstood by everybody. Some people thought it was R & D and a lot of people thought it was programme development which it wasn't. It was a kind of master dogsbody role in a sense, although it had two very important aspects. The first was that I took over the whole of the capital planning of the Television Service and to go with the Television Development Committee which had been set up actually by Huw with Joanna and Paul Hughes and Derek Grubb, it was a trio. Paul Hughes who was to become Director of Finance, there was then Chief Accountant Television, Derek Grubb who was the Development Engineer for the Service. And it was the role of the Television Development

Committee and still is now under Bill Cotton and Mike Checkland. And I ran it for some six years. It's role was to review all the logistical requirements of the service, both in London and throughout the country, national regions, English regions, everywhere. To work with the Radio planning group when that came along and to do joint planning particularly in the regional centres and to actually do the budget, the capital budget and the revenue budget for the service. It therefore was a) highly important to the Service and the BBC, b) of course was very much the policy forming little group. And the Regional Developments and the application of Regional policy partly stemmed from above but also came out of the work of bodies like TC where you had the accountant, development engineer and in effect a kind of planning supremo. Deciding what to recommend to the Managing Director and I think it has to be said that it was very rare that our recommendations were not accepted. And in recent years of course very important recommendations were being made. The Development of Stage Five of the Television Service in 1981, as I talk amid the building of car park by the, near the entrance to the Television Centre and an absolutely vital first stage in building the latter, the next stages of Stage Five. And completing the Television Centre. A very contentious decision which actually we've, and I say it advisedly, forced through the Board and right up through the Finance Committee and argued and had it rejected and pushed it back again and got it through. Because unless you go through those contentious stages of a plan and are prepared to face up to people saying well they are building well they don't need any money they are building a bloody carpark, then you will never get anywhere, actually. And in that I was actually opposed by the Director General, Trethowan who said I was quite wrong you know you will regret your carpark you won't get it through. But I got it through the Board and I got it past the Unions as well.

And so the Television Development Committee was actually going around the country pursuing a regional policy as fast as it could in spite of capital investment cut backs, and trying to keep the regions not at bay at all, but integrate them as closely as possible with new network productions Centres emerging making those Heads of Network centres feel that they were actually part of the Service. There was of course buildings like Pebble Mill which Joanna's Group had pushed through and All Saints Manchester which my Group actually completed including the stages Two and Three. And the Cardiff Development which we pushed through the new studios of Llandaff. And the new little centres elsewhere

and the developments in places like Norwich and improvements at Plymouth and so on. All those things were very vital to keep this a) to make the Regional Policy make sense, and B) to encourage the regions actually who are centres at least, and the National Regions to produce good programmes for the network. To actually make that new Regional Policy which came about in from 1969 actually produce as good programmes as, or better programmes than had been the case before.

Now I think one can say that after ten years of that even though Manchester is now really only just sort of come on the screen, not even yet complete as I speak in 1981, but Cardiff now working very well. And Birmingham proving in the end to be an enormous success, although regarded at one time as a white elephant. I think it can be said that the policy of the network centre has actually worked. It worked, curiously enough, with the possible exception of Bristol. Which was in many ways the strongest which had in the 60's attracted to it things like Natural history, and brought about this marvellous output of specialism in that natural history, but it evolved very much as a film centre, and then it had been left behind when the other developments took place and it is probable that Bristol now is the biggest problem still amongst the network centres, although it can't be said that it is producing bad programmes when you have things like Life on Earth coming out of it. But it is, it may well be the biggest problem in the future.

So there was all that work to be done in TDC and I began to like that logistical planning. And of course it stood me in extremely good stead when in 1977 when Huw Wheldon was left and Alasdair was .. Alasdair Milne was translated to the top job and when he asked me to be his deputy right across the board.

The other thing that had occupied me to some extent was the whole International scene where I became I suppose sort of Ambassador for the Television Service, the senior representative in many European gatherings, and with Gerry Mansell well known figure in other respects and with Charles of course as President of the European Broadcasting Union, it was a very powerful BBC team altogether. Which of course now does not exist at all and it is a loss, I don't say this personally but the BBC has come out because of people and the absense of people and I know these things are historical accidents in a sense, but there is a feeling in Europe as a result of the three people concerned now having left the scene that the BBC has somehow or other turned its back on Europe which of course is far from the truth. But there is an

element of truth in it in that the new administration of the BBC is known to be less European in its outlook, perhaps looking more towards America again, rather than across the Channel.
And for as long as I was involved in that I was at pains, partly because I am a European, to make it plain that the BBC was not an insular organisation but an outward looking one which was keen to exchange programmes with its partners.

I suppose one of my other more important roles in the last three years of office was the responsibility for the whole of the production staff, nearly 2000 people on my establishment and one obviously read all the reports one wrote a great many of them, and even though it was difficult to get in amongst them because one of the things that I did not get from Alasdair was the editorial power which had been previously invested in the Director of Programmes. He decided when he became Managing Director in 1977 to take, assume the functions of the Director of Programmes in his Managing Director role but in fact to share a great part of his Managing Director role in terms of the control of the logistics and staff and so on to me. It meant of course that whereas previously the Managing Director, when it had been Huw Wheldon, had been, he complained always a little bit out of touch with the programme side, I now became out of touch as the number two, because I had no direct editorial control, although I, because I had been around so long in the place knew pretty well what was going on. But a number of the problems which occurred, they occurred over the interview with the Irish Provo, or INLA man in the Tonight programme. They occurred subsequently over the filming for the Carrickmore as part of programme Panorama programme about Ireland which was known to be going on but which when we heard about it I happened to be in Belfast as a matter of fact, when I heard about Carrickmore, and it was the first I'd heard of it, because that whole chain of command went up a separate way, quite wrongly I felt, and Bill Cotton and I had been going at Alasdair to say we really must control this thing more. You must talk more to Dick Francis. You must get these two things closer because there will be trouble again. Because both the INLA interview and the subsequent Carrickmore film came as a bolt out of the blue. And it was understandable that Gerry Mansell wh was involved in running the BBC because it was after Ian Trethowan's heart attack, felt that the Television Service should put its house in order as Maggie Thatcher had said in Cabinet or in the House. The reaction of the BBC, the Governors, the meeting that I was at all our reactions I think were wrong to Carrickmore, but there was an element of peevish resentment, the fact that apparently

these chaps these cowboys had been going it alone. And Dick Francis perhaps didn't stand up enough and say look this was actually okay this incident went wrong and they should have been more careful to follow up that interview, in following up that lead, but it doesn't reveal an enormous defect in the operation of the BBC as a whole. It's the kind of thing that can happen even in the best run organisations. And it went wrong because of a lack of confidence in the executive. Now it is possible that some of that came about because of Alasdair Milne's own way of governing, or running the Television Service and I find it very difficult at times to take a lot of the load and smooth things over because he would make the wrong decisions in personnel terms and so on which had to be covered up. And I began to feel that although obviously the next, he was the next Director General designate as Ian Trethowan had made perfectly plain in putting Aubrey Singer in to be Managing Director Radio, he had also made it plain that he wanted another person in another executive, in a top executive position and that Aubrey was an alternative to Alasdair as his successor since he had been it had been made perfectly plain to Ian Trethowan when he was appointed that it was not a unanimous appointment by any means that there were doubts and hesitations and that in any case he would serve only his statutory term up to his 60th birthday. And I think that it is worth saying something about the way that appointment was brought about. Others may have said things.

But But Chairman Swann was at great pains to talk to some 15 or 20 of his senior executives and others about who should be the next Director General, knowing that this was his most important decision in office. Just as it had been in a sense Hill's biggest responsibility was to have Curran to succeed Greene. And I was called in to talk to Sir Michael as were a number of my other colleagues and we all were asked very searching questions about what we thought about Ian Trethowan, what we thought about Gerry Mansell as candidates for this important post and of course there was no doubt that whereas Gerry was the one who was, his whole instinct training and sense of responsibility was deeply rooted in the BBC and was a man who pioneered a very important developments in radio in the planning of BBC as a whole and of course Bush House, but Ian had at least the Television experience and that he had possibly over the years, remember this was before the return to power of the Conservatives and there was possibly a feeling that he had that he would be more likely to get on better with the Tories, that he would nonetheless also stand up for the BBC and what it stood for.

On the other hand there were doubts about whether he was a man of sufficient energy and sufficient enthusiasm, whether really his heart was in the BBC. And I can't say that subsequent events have totally laid those suspicions and fears. And of course a person has to be totally fit for the job. On the other hand Gerry Mansell showed two decisions that I thought were marginally wrong during the period when he was holding the fort. The first was the de cision in effect not to allow repeat of a consumer programme which although it had been brought up to date did contain a criticism of I think a Marina car, a BL car anyway. And Edward 25/had said in effect, written in knowing this was going to be repeated and I was attending a Board of Management in Alasdair's place, a thing which I did quite often because a lot of the time he wasn't there, or he was not altogether well, and I said at the Board of Management it is on record I hoped that the Acting Director General would not go so far as to censor this programme acting on Edward's complaint.
But he felt very seriously about it, went to see Chairman Swann and the programme was in fact censored and I thought that was a totally wrong decision. I thought that his attitude over Carrickmore agonised throughout the weekend between the Board row and the Monday both of us and met early on Monday morning Gerry and I and went through it again and again and again, and eventually of course the sentence as it were on Gau, the Head of Current Affairs Group and on Roger Bolton was reduced to one of reprimand whereas the initial thought that Bolton at least should be dismissed.

And yet I felt that there was here exercising power, executive power somebody who was used to a different kind of executive decision making in the editorial sense at Bush House, which although it's a body of considerable independence from government, none the less does speak with an inspired national voice, and it would be unthinkable in Bush House for the programme criticising British Leyland, obviously the agonies of British Leyland strikes would be reported on the news, but there wouldn't actually be a feature taking them to task broadcast to the Greeks the Turks and the Americans and so on. The different attitude about the projection of Britain and when you've worked in Bush House for a long time, as I did with 12 years in the 40's and early 50's you get a different outlook on things. You get inculcated a feeling that you should not do anything that is damaging to Britain even though internally there may be perfectly justifiable criticism.
So that in various respects I began to and some of my other colleagues old timers if you like and I don't think they were wrong to have

fears about the governance of the BBC. Both at the level of the Board of Governors and at the level of the Board of Management. I think there are serious weaknesses. I believe that one of the difficulties is that there are fewer and fewer people who are ready to come forward and take ultimate responsibility in decision taking. I believe also that one of the problems is of course a problem of confidence in the organisation and that a lot of investigatory commissions have had a go at the BBC. Annan had a go, I think the Annan chapter on moral standards in the Annan report is marvellous. I think a lot of the other things that Annan recommended were quite wrong. But there is a feeling of lack of confidence a feeling also that at the top the people are neither totally professional and backing those involved and making right professional judgements and nor are they playing the proper role of Governors standing back a bit from it and if they don't like people sacking them, getting rid of them. And this feeling of lack of confidence and the known rivalries that there are at the top and as will be inevitably the case the feeling of rivalry between Alasdair Milne and Aubrey Singer as the decision time approaches before the appointment of the next Director General. The lack of senior executive persons in the television service and the dispersal of many of the figures who brought about I think the greatest achievements of the 60's and early 70's, places an enormous strain on people like Alasdair Milne who I think have got in some ways to change perhaps his own character in order to assume the final responsible role of Director General and that is going to be difficult for him. But I think he's got to do it because otherwise I can't see the Director General being appointed from inside. But he is a person of the most tremendous integrity and devotion to good professional broadcasting, to independence of thought and so on. It maybe that after all if he does get made Director General he will have proved that he was the right man that Huw Wheldon was right to bring him back make him Controller Scotland and bring him back to London and so on. I hope so for his sake because I like him very much. Even though at times he makes me absolutely furious over this and that.

Brian Wenham is a good man in many respects, a bit too close perhaps, he is his own chap, he may be a shade too clever to succeed in the organisation. He maybe not capable of open approach, on the other hand he's a most agreeable companion and he's never short on ideas and he's no doubt done a very good job with BBC 2 although at times I feel its gone a little bit too

pop. And there's been a little bit too much attachment towards audience catching.

Michael Checkland is a very sound financial figure good administrator and planning and so on, I don't know whether he will survive because there is only one job he can go to that's Director of Finance and the chap there is too young.

So that all in all I'm a bit concerned but I suppose that some of it is the concern of somebody who's left a school and thinks the school is never going to be the same after he's gone. A little bit of that.

GILLARD: Just very briefly, if you had your time in the BBC over again, is there anything you would have done differently. Would you have left it for example in mid career?

SCOTT: Well I did of course leave it in 1962 and went into the private world, and I am glad I did even though it cost me a lot in terms of pension rights and so on. I think that what I would have done probably was to have left the BBC much earlier and come back. I think also what I would have done would, should have done was to leave the French service earlier than I did and go to television or indeed go through Broadcasting House in the early 50's rather than leaving it to '54/55. I think that was a mistake on my part. But that was because I had this enormous attachment to the French service and I suppose was too deeply involved. As one tends to get.

GILLARD: Which part of your varied career has given you most satisfaction do you feel?

SCOTT: Oh I think setting up Radio's One and Two.

GILLARD: Really?

SCOTT: Yes I really do. I mean I obviously I know that sounds absurd when I've done 5½ years with BBC 2, and of course that was absolutely marvellous. But that kind of commando thing going in there and achieving that and being encouraged in the way I was and being happy the whole time doing it I.. I'm talking about happiness here. As well as success and so on. Not in material terms at all. But I think that is what I guess I will be remembered for.

GILLARD: Yes I'm sure it is a great monument.

SCOTT: A very happy one.

GILLARD: As you say. Well now what are your feelings about the BBC at the end of it all. Your real attachment to it?

SCOTT: Well I suppose the BBC is going to come now to a very difficult time in my last, I should have said perhaps of course one of the things that I was deeply concerned with was relations with ITV for the last years from '74 to 80 and was involved in settling many of the important disputes the football dispute working out sharing of air time to different events and so on. It's a whole saga in itself. I think the BBC is realising and I hope I've done something to achieve that that it is part of a single industry, that its got to play its part in the new technological developments, but at all costs it mustn't lose its capacity to produce good programmes.

GILLARD: Well, thank you very much indeed. I think this really is the end of your great effort.