



World-wide Coverage for the Royal Wedding

Week 29 1986 will long be remembered as something of a milestone for BBC outside broadcasts. It was THE week when virtually every major O.B. facility was in use, the week when a royal wedding was immediately followed by a major UK sports event, the Commonwealth Games. And just to keep everyone firmly on their toes, OBs at the Test Match, the Henry Wood proms, the Open Golf, Boxing Heavyweight Championship Fight and Ascot were included for good measure.

This Royal wedding then was characterised by a major planning of resources, and very creditably, everything went without a hitch. Some pretty smart shifting of equipment was of course involved. For example, equipment used earlier in the week at the Open Golf Championship was split to two destinations; television equipment moved on to the Test Match and radio equipment was rushed to cover the Wedding. As the Royal Wedding OB was drawing to a close, literally as the Abbey service ended and the last of the procession passed by, some television equipment was moved on to the Test Match and an overnight exodus of camera lenses took place destined for the Commonwealth Games.

As is the custom for major royal events, many of the broadcasting facilities for the Royal Wedding were exclusively provided by the BBC. Television OBs set and supervised the lighting in Westminster Abbey, and Radio OBs were responsible for the sound of the wedding service in the Abbey. The sound was then provided for television and the world's broadcasters either as a clean feed (sound minus any commentary) or as mixed feed with commentary added.

For BBC Radio the royal wedding was an altogether more complex exercise than the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. More walkabouts with roving reporters were used with the sound being relayed via miniature transmitters carried as backpacks. Also a new Radio OB Mobile Link

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David Dimpleby in the main commentators studio

Editorial

Preparing for a recent exhibition, I was confronted with the problem of the correct spelling of a word that would appear on a six inch high graphic. Being a poor speller, I consulted the standard BBC Oxford pocket dictionary, only to find that the word could be spelt two ways! Realising that this was a bigger problem than I had imagined, I asked my colleagues in EID for their opinions, and checked with the reference library; the former suggested the word-processor spell-checker which offered one spelling, and the latter consulted a larger dictionary - and that offered the alternative! As a last resort, I rang the British Library, and they said that either spelling was correct, but that any technical document used by the BBC would already have set the precedent, and must therefore be correct.

By now you will be wondering what the word was. I refer, of course, to "routing" or "routeing". Inspection of the Comms Department Handbook suggested the first spelling without the "e", and this was duly put onto the graphics for the exhibition.

Subsequently, I was sent a cutting by Nigel Phillips (TVC Duty Engineer) taken from the Guardian in 1978. This makes reference to "Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers" and suggests that this debate has been going on for years. It includes words like "adaptors" or "adapters", "glueing" and "gluing". Taking a lead from Hart, I will, in future, be using "routeing" with an "e" to distinguish it from "routing", meaning defeating. I would welcome other readers views.

IERE

Have you ever looked at a job advertisement in Ariel and seen "membership of the relevant institution desirable", and given up the idea of promotion because you haven't got the "desirable" qualification? Now you have the opportunity to rectify the situation by joining the IERE, who are currently having a campaign to recruit new members. Application forms and more information can be obtained by contacting me at 707, HWH or ringing LBH 5432.

Alan Lafferty

1000th Ampex VPR



Bryon Parkin, Managing' Director, BBC Enterprises, accepts the 1000th VPR video tape recorder bought by the BBC from Ampex.

Transmitters Opened

The following transmitters have opened or changed since April

UHF Television

Ballintoy	Co Antrim
Brinscall	Lancs
Crewkerne	Somerset
Dorking	Surrey
Harbertonford	Devon
Llansawel	Dyfed
Talley	Dyfed
Wardle	Lancs

VHF Radio

Fenham	Tyne & Wear
Kendal	Cumbria
Windermere	Cumbria

Local Radio

R. Bedfordshire	Luton
R. Bedfordshire	Sandy Heath
R. Cambridgeshire	peterborough
R. Devon	Huntshaw Cross
R. Cumbria	Kendal
R. Cumbria	Windermere
R. Gwent	Christchurch
R. Kent	Swingate
R. Kent	Wrotham
R. Newcastle	Chatton
R. Newcastle	Fenham

New OB vehicle for the Royal Wedding

In 1985, the BBC placed a contract for the supply of five new major television outside broadcast vehicles (the Type 6 Colour Mobile Control Room) for service in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. At the time it was planned that the first of these vehicles would make its first programme in YN"alesin lat.e 1986. In fact it made its debut in London as the central control vehicle providing coverage of the Royal wedding on 23 July 1986.

The reason for this change of plan was the unfortunate, from a broadcasting point of view, juxtaposition of the Royal Wedding and the Commonwealth Games. The opening ceremony of the Games in Edinburgh was on 24 July and the BBC, as Host Broadcaster, provided television and radio facilities to many Commonwealth countries as well as to the BBC domestic and external services networks.

To provide the coverage, a temporary broadcast centre was built in Edinburgh and a large part of the BBC's outside broadcast resources were committed, including the television Colour Mobile Central Control Room (CMCCR). This vehicle which has been in service since 1981, was specially designed to cover large scale OBs and it is interesting to consider the design concept of such a vehicle.

Design Concepts

The heart of a television vehicle is the production control room. The problem of covering a very large event is that a large number of cameras are needed and the producer usually wishes to be able to monitor all of them. Once the number of monitors gets into the twenties or thirties, the stack becomes very large. In practice, this means very wide as the human neck is much more comfortable when scanning from side to side than when moving up and down.

In plan view the ideal production area is roughly square. If it is too wide, too much neck turning is needed. If it is too deep, the monitor viewing distance is too great. Unfortunately vehicles are not square; road traffic requirements make them long and thin, with the external width limited to 2.5 metres. The designer is faced with the decision of aligning his production desk across the vehicle or along its length. In the first case he limits the width of the monitor stack, the

number of seats at the desk and the ease of movement of staff between areas. In the second alternative the production staff are close to the monitors and if the stack is too wide the person at one end of the desk has a poor view of the monitors at the other end. There is also very limited space for the production staff between the desk and the wall. Nevertheless, the BBC has in recent years favoured the latter approach as the lesser of two evils.

The design of the CMCCR incorporated a neat solution to this problem. Large sections of the vehicle walls can be slid outwards creating a production control area approximately 5 metres wide by 4.5 metres deep within a 2.5 metre vehicle. Such a design is not suitable for general use because of parking and space problems. However, the number of programmes requiring facilities on this scale is small enough that it is generally adequate to have one such vehicle in the fleet.

The announcement of the Royal Wedding date created the exceptional circumstance which could not have been foreseen. The CMCCR was irrevocably committed to the Commonwealth Games and clearly could not cover a programme in London on the previous day. None of the other vehicles in the fleet was felt to be suitable for the planned coverage of the wedding. Consideration was given to building a temporary installation at or near the Abbey but this would have been costly and time consuming. It was then suggested that one of the new Type 6 vehicles might be brought into service for this purpose.