



ANDREW GOSLING  
26th October 1944 - 11th May 2016

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF HIS LIFE BY IAN KEILL

I first met Andrew Gosling in 1970 when he edited a less than reverential film I made about William Wordsworth for "*Late Night Line-Up*". After that he collaborated with me on many productions - first as film editor, then as director - for over twenty-five years. We became a sort of Ant-and-Dec-Behind-the-Camera.

He was a man of great talent and enormous charm. Someone who could be relied on to come up with the goods with the least amount of fuss. In all the time I worked with him we rarely had a disagreement. It was a very happy and fruitful partnership.

Andrew was educated at Eton - a fact that he played down all his life. He never used his schooling as a stepping stone to anything ... he made his way in life the way he wanted. Simply. Gently. However, during his time at Eton he directed a stage production of T. S. Elliot's "*Murder in the Cathedral*". This was well received, and it resulted in him securing a place at the Oxford Playhouse. There then followed work at the Century travelling theatre - an incredible set-up presenting plays from a set of lumbering wagons trailing from town to town all over the North of England.

Here he did anything and everything associated with being an 'Assistant Stage Manager and Small Parts'.

In the 1960s he decided to change course, and became a film editor at Associated Rediffusion. He then joined the Gordon Bradley production company, and was a film editor for some of the earliest-ever pop promos, including *Strawberry Fields* and *Penny Lane* by the Beatles.

In the late 60s he joined the BBC and was a film editor for the Arts department. This was followed by a spell working for the Presentation Department on BBC 2 - where he joined me for a stint directing "*Up Sunday*" on BBC-2. This was a satirical spin-off from "*Late Night Line-Up*" - the long running arts chat show. It brought him in contact with a broad spectrum of performers in-

cluding the three Johns: Fortune, Bird and Wells, and also Willie Rushton, Clive James, James Cameron and Kenny Everett. John Wells described it as "... a programme for dirty-minded insomniacs". The programmes were made in "Pres. B" - a continuity studio which was already home to "LNU" with Joan Bakewell, Denis Tuohy, Michael Dean, Tony Bilbow and Sheridan Morley - and was where "The Old Grey Whistle Test" and Barry Norman's film programmes first saw the light of day. It was not an ideal studio for making sketch shows with actors, as you couldn't swing a countdown clock. To us it was "the broom cupboard under the stairs".



*Andrew in the office at TVC*

When colour came in, Colour Separation Overlay was born (CSO ... or Chroma Key on ITV) and I hit on the idea of making the scenery for our sketches look bigger by getting a cartoonist (Bob Gale) to draw it in perspective. Andrew's and my first in-depth involvement with the new technique was a series of "The End of the Pier Show" with John Wells, John Fortune, Madeline Smith and guests - who included Peter Sellers, John Laurie, Ivor Cutler and Percy Edwards (the bird impressionist)! There were three songs per show - written by John Wells with music by the composer Carl Davis. But success was limited, as we could not get far enough away from the blue cyclorama, and the performers were occasionally framed by an unwelcome blue halo.



*The End of the Pier Show: Carl Davis, John Fortune, Madeline Smith & John Wells. Illustrator: Bob Gale .*

Andrew and I then had a breath of fresh air with a series of six ten-minute films on "Cornish Shipwrecks" - based on the wonderful photographs taken of shipwrecks by a family of photographers from the Scilly Islands in Victorian times: 'The Gibsons of Scilly'. In 1975 there wasn't an awful lot left to see, as the ships had all gone to Davy Jones's locker a century before. But we did have the photographs ...

We then worked on two series of "Rutland Weekend Television" (1975/1976), written and performed by Eric Idle and Neil Innes, plus David Battley, Gwen Taylor and Henry Woolf - with a guest performance on the Christmas Special by George Harrison (dressed as a pirate). The series was a Pythonesque spin-off made in "Pres B", on film and in the BBC studios in Bristol. Ostensibly the programmes came from a small television station in the Rutland of the title ... and our budget reflected that.

In 1976 we graduated to Studio 3 at the TV Centre for the first of several one-hour CSO fairy tales. To Andrew and me it had all the terrors of going to 'big school' for the first time. Andrew directed and I produced and co-wrote an adaptation of Hans Andersen's: *"The Snow Queen"*. The entire production was set against artwork by the celebrated children's illustrator: Errol le Cain. Carl Davis wrote the music. It featured animated cartoon characters in conversation with the actors in the same shot - a first for the Beeb. Today the technique would be considered 'old hat' in the light of Harry Potter/Superman etc. Back then it was unknown territory on the telly - and a real act of faith. Although we weren't aware of it, I suppose we were media pioneers at the time. *"The Snow Queen"* went out on Christmas Day after the Queen's speech - and was repeated the two following Christmases.



Then came the first of three series of *"The Innes Book of Records"* (1978/1979/1981) with the multi-talented Neil Innes - ex of *"The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band"*. Each show contained three songs written and performed by Neil - plus guests including Michael Palin, The Pump Room Trio and the Women's League of Health and Beauty - both from Bath, and Roy Plomley, Sir John Betjeman and Rowan Atkinson. The musical director was John Altman. *"Only one light entertainment programme this season looks like the product of lively new thinking ..."* was how Chris Dunkley (TV critic of The Financial Times) described *"IBOR"*. We glowed.

In 1977 Andrew and I collaborated on six programmes in the series: *"In the Looking Glass"* - experimental CSO musicals which again featured the Johns: Wells, Fortune and Bird, with music by Carl Davis. This received a BAFTA nomination for: "Most Original Programme".

More electronic fantasies followed - each one that bit more challenging. I used to cook up dotty effects just to see if Andrew could cope. And he did. Every time. The shows included: *"The Light Princess"* (RTS award for Technique) (1978) - *"Moving Pictures"* (1980) - *"The Mystery of the Disappearing Schoolgirls"* (1980) - which was also shown in Canada over several Christmases. Plus, two strip cartoons featuring: *"Jane"* (of The Mirror) (1982 & 1984) (BAFTA award for Graphics created by Graham McCallum - and also an RTS award for 'Most Original Programme'), *"The Ghost Downstairs"* (Design and Art Direction award: 'Best Use of Graphics in a Drama' - for Errol le Cain's artwork) (1962) and *"The Pyrates"* (1986).



Andrew and Graham McCallum (illustrator) of *"The Pyrates"*

We also collaborated on “A Question of Fact” - ‘The Face at the Window’ (1986) - a cheeky half-hour film described by Dick Fiddy, chief archivist at the National Film Theatre, as being “... the Rolls Royce of April Fool jokes”. (1986). More glowing!

Our professional association at the BBC then came to an end and Andrew went on to direct a musical in Canada: “The King of Friday Night” (1985) and later: a documentary with songs in Australia: “Song of the Outback” (2010). He also became associated with a number of challenging television development projects in Kenya and Uganda over ten years in the 1990s.

We came together once again - as independents, from 1990 - 1993, when we both worked on “Gardener’s World” and an assortment of gardening programmes for Tony Laryea’s Catalyst Television. The answer may lie in the soil - but both of us were rather hazy about the questions. We left the spiel to Geoff Hamilton.

Andrew’s home life away from London and the Television Centre was inclined towards the idyllic. Over many years he lived on two islands in the River Blackwater Estuary in Essex - Osea Island first, and then further up the coast on West Mersea Island. Here he followed his beloved pursuits of sailing and cycling (ten miles a day, minimum, every day) - and he was an excellent vegetarian cook. Marsh samphire and sea spinach, ‘locally sourced’ off the beach, were favoured ingredients!

He had two daughters by his first wife: Rosie - Amanda and Catherine, and a third daughter, Matilda - by his second wife Imogen. His close-knit family also included his sister Annabel and two brothers, Alexander and Robert. How they will miss him.



*Andrew and Matilda in the Blackwater Estuary*

While at the Beeb Andrew and I were allowed to make some really off-the-wall programmes. And both of us were extremely grateful for the opportunities we were given. Sometimes I wonder how we got away with it. Maybe it had something to do with working for a department that wasn’t really supposed to be making programmes at all: Presentation!! Although of course, once “Points of View” started, other shows started to appear. But our time at the BBC coincided with what has been described as “The Golden Years” - when BBC-2 first took to the airwaves and colour burst onto the screen. It was a time when people were encouraged to be different, take risks and ‘just go-for-it’. Another world indeed. The “new brooms”, accompanied by an assortment of executives, co-production deals and contributions from independent companies had not yet arrived. It was when the Television Centre was at the heart of it all - and we loved working there. Andrew Gosling and I were so lucky.

I was, of course, even more fortunate to work with such a wonderful colleague and friend over all those years.

This week I received a letter from a documentary film editor with whom we both worked - Grant Muter - in it he said; *"I always felt better after being in Andrew's company, he lifted up your spirits. Very sad to see him go"*. Everyone with whom he came in contact felt like that. There's nothing more I can add.



*Cartoon by Roger Bunce (BBC cameraman) of Andrew after falling off his bike while making "The Pyrates"!*

Ian Keill.