



A New Dimension in Live Outside Broadcasting

PETER DIMMOCK, General Manager, Outside Broadcasts, Television, looks forward to 1970 and the possible transition of all OB units from monochrome to colour.

FOR months we had all been discussing and preparing in an atmosphere of slight excitement for the arrival of our first BBC designed and built colour mobile unit. Among others, Dennis Monger, one of our senior television OB producers, had been to the States and Japan to study colour television at first hand there, and, on the Engineering side, Alan Woolford made a special trip to the States at the end of last year to spend some weeks out on location with C.B.S.'s new West Coast colour TV mobile unit stationed at Los Angeles.

We all hoped that the new plumbicon colour cameras would produce some of the best colour TV pictures to be seen anywhere in the world. But I doubt whether in our wildest dreams we really expected the Unit to work as successfully as it did for hours on end day by day throughout the Wimbledon fortnight without giving us some anxieties and producing the teething troubles that usually are to be found when a TV mobile unit goes operational for the first time. In fact this was the only reason for our having at Wimbledon the colour unit in addition



Scanners lined up at Wimbledon.

to the monochrome ones. Eventually, of course, a mobile OB unit will normally provide both colour and monochrome pictures at the same time. We had an inkling that things seemed to be going well when a trial coverage of Trooping the Colour produced some remarkably good pictures which we recorded on videotape. So good was the coverage of the dazzling uniforms that, as someone pointed out afterwards, you could even see where a new piece of material had been patched into the original jacket. There was a very slight difference in the shade, and the cameras spotted this.

By far the most exciting results of being first in Europe with our colour coverage of Wimbledon was the successful monochrome compatible pictures produced from the colour cameras. In fact, the black-and-white pictures were often better than the ones being produced on the Channel 1 405 lines output.

So much for our initial good luck and for which so much credit is due to the excellent team spirit of our technicians and cameramen so superbly led throughout the fortnight by OB Engineering Managers J. R. Thomas and A. J. Woolford, Vision Control Engineers R. Gibbs and D. Crowland,

Senior OB Cameraman E. G. Cocks, and Sound Engineer M. Johnstone.

These 'trail blazer' outside broadcasts in colour have simply been the advance guard of what we hope will be the regular coverage in colour of all major OB events. Our second unit is due to arrive before David Attenborough formally opens his regular colour service on BBC-2 in December. It is my earnest hope that during 1968, 1969, and 1970 we shall perhaps see the transition of all OB units from monochrome to colour so that when BBC-1 begins to transmit in colour in 1970, all BBC outside broadcasts will originate in colour.

Improving techniques

Meanwhile, we hope to keep on learning and improving our techniques all the time. All OB production staff and engineering personnel will receive experience in operating from the colour OB units and experience has already shown that there is not a great deal of difference in production technique. Backgrounds can be a problem when, in good light, the camera is stopped down and, as on some days at Wimbledon, for example,



Trooping the Colour.

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