

# TAKING TV TO THAILAND

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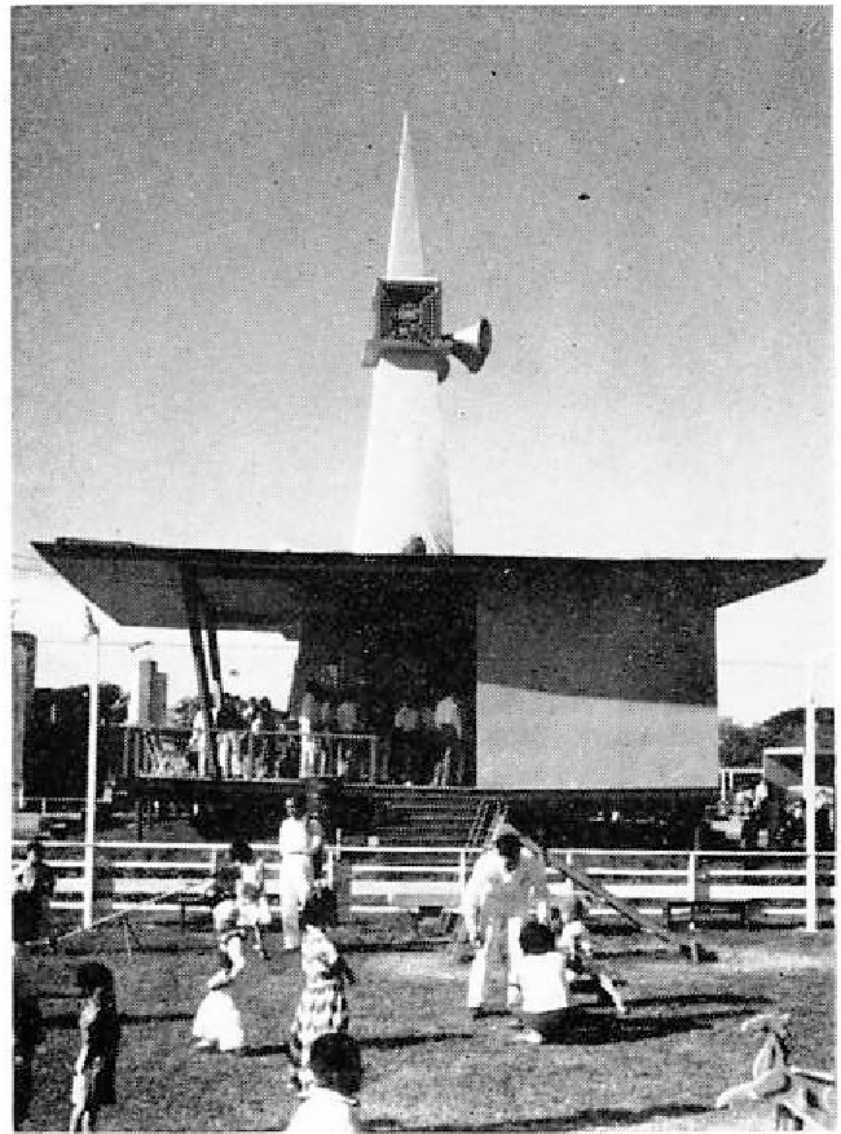
TELEVISION IN THAILAND is a fact, that Marconi have supplied the equipment is another fact and one of which all those concerned in the manufacture and production should take a pride.

Tenders for a small TV station together with a small number of receivers were asked for by Thailand last autumn. Through the energy and keenness of our local representatives, Messrs. Yip In Tsoi Ltd. of Bangkok, Marconi's were fortunate to receive an order not only for one complete set of equipment to be delivered in one month, but also for a duplicate set to be delivered a month or two later.

It was also requested that if possible the first lot of equipment be delivered and set to work by a team of three Marconi engineers in time for the opening of Bangkok Constitutional Fair, which was due to begin in less than two weeks from the time the order was received.

This on the face of it was impossible. Firstly because it would take that long to finish making those items which were still in the workshops at Chelmsford, secondly because it would take that long to assemble all the gear; it would take that long to pack it and to transport it and to get all the necessary permits from the Ministry of This and the Bank of That. Apart from all this there were a number of "bought outside" items involved on which there were quoted deliveries of several weeks, and one of several months.

Broadcasting Division was mainly concerned with these items in the first place, but of course were helpless without the utmost co-operation of almost



*The television pavilion at the Bangkok Constitutional Fair*

every section of the Works. And this was given.

Four people were mainly concerned with this job in Broadcasting, and for a week they wrote, telephoned, bullied, cajoled, wheedled and one promised almost unlimited quantities of beer in order to get things moving.

I was rather on the outside of this, because having been told to provide a team to do the demonstration my main purpose was to see that we were ready to leave on time. Ron Swindon and Fred Kenyon were chosen to accompany me. Not too easy when one man was in Liverpool on a demonstration and another was on a week's leave.

Apart from passports, injections and tropical clothing to be thought of, we had to go into the details of every separate piece of equipment supplied so that we would know where each piece fitted into the scheme, and, more important still, check that nothing whatever had been left out. Seven thousand

miles is a long way to send for an essential item, even if it is nothing more than a small screw such as you might find on anybody's bench at New Street.

The Demonstration Unit had not used some of the new equipment before. This meant studying circuits, talking to the designers and development engineers, learning how to use it and set it up. We had to be prepared to give lectures to Thai engineers on details of circuits and construction.

Somehow all these things got done and as items were passed by Works Test and inspectors they were seized by the Packing Department and whisked away, not to be seen again until they arrived at their destination. How many times Packing were told "That's the lot!" before the last item was really handed over I don't rightly know, but they seemed imperturbable. I suppose that the chief characteristics looked for in a packer are patience and forbearance.

Transport took their share of it. All the equipment was sent air freight, and space on these transport planes has to be booked some time ahead. Due to a hundred reasons package was late and had to be re-booked, one lot via Paris, another via Rome. Fogs held up planes and new arrangements had to be made. But in spite of all, the equipment arrived in Bangkok in good order with all paper work correct.

Our own day of departure rushed to meet us, and we arrived at London Airport on a cold evening with sleet falling. It didn't take long to get through the formalities—Can I see your ticket; passport, please? Have you anything except personal luggage? How much money have you—all very quick and easy provided you have the right answers. And then there was our Comet, looking surprisingly small.

It was just half an hour after midnight when the door closed on England. The steward made an announcement, "In two hours time we shall be in Rome, where



*One of the lovely marble temples in Bangkok shining in the sun*

breakfast will be served. We shall be flying at 35,000 feet. Please fasten your safety belts." Then the engines were started and run up and we taxied out into the sleet and blackness. A little anxiety (is it safe in this weather?) and the reassuring knowledge of all that has been done and the hundreds of people who at that moment are working for the safety of all aircraft and ours in particular.

Another run up and down of the engines, then a pause and at last all the engines run up together and when up to full strength the brakes are released, and with a thrilling degree of acceleration we move forward, feeling the vibration of the wheels on the runway. . . . Suddenly the vibration stops and we are airborne. The jet engines are smooth and the noise is much less than a propeller aircraft, and in a few minutes we are flying in bright moonlight above the storm.

The cabin lights are dimmed and one by one individual reading lights are switched off, until finally all the passengers are asleep in the comfortable chairs which have been adjusted almost flat.

In practically no time at all we arrive at Rome. We are shepherded to a dining room and given bacon and eggs. Early



*"See yourself televised" with Ron Swindon in charge of the camera*



*The faces he sees are a little different from those at home, but the enjoyment is the same*

for breakfast, yes, but we have to overtake seven hours before another twenty have passed; when passengers from a westward bound Dutch air liner came in they had tea and cakes—afternoon tea—while we were having breakfast.

It was still dark when fifty minutes after landing we left Rome. Apart from the weather we might have still been leaving London. The door closed, the steward made his announcement with a little difference, "Two hours five minutes—Beirut—36,000 feet, safety belts." Lights dimmed, reading lights went out and we were at Beirut having coffee and cakes. It was warmer here and very humid: pullovers came off. The colour of the skins of the local officials was appreciably darker.

Again in less than an hour we were off, and still, despite the warmth on the ground, ice formed on the windows and sometimes inside as well. This despite the air conditioned cabin which was always kept comfortably warm.

As we took off my watch showed 8 o'clock in the morning, but the airport clock said 10 o'clock, so we had lunch, this time in the plane. Hot soup, cold chicken, salad, sweets, cheese and coffee,

and, oh yes, there was a glass of wine "on the house".

Bahrein—half-past eleven, so we had tea. Now it was really hot and we saw for the first time people wearing turban and burnouse and looking just as if they had stepped out of a Bible story.

Karachi—three o'clock says my watch but it was dark. So we had a drink.

Delhi—half-past five and we had a late dinner (the local clocks showed eleven o'clock).

Calcutta—eight o'clock and just time for a cup of tea and a piece of cake and then for the last time this trip we heard the steward make his by now almost monotonous announcement, "Two hours ten minutes—Bangkok—35,000 feet—safety belts." Roar of engines—taxi—take off—sleep and then the wonderful sight of an Eastern dawn breaking, looking down on to a world of bright sunlight ahead and pitch blackness behind.

A dawn where every colour is blending and changing until it brings a lump into your throat for the sheer beauty of it. Below and ahead you can see Bangkok, its river looking like a giant snake in the morning sunshine. I look at my watch, which says—midnight.