

# POSTSCRIPT TO EMPIRE



## DOCUMENTARY

### BILLING

POSTSCRIPT TO EMPIRE

BRITAIN IN TRANSITION

AN INTERTEL PRODUCTION

INTRODUCED BY ROD MACLEISH

NARRATOR: JOSEPH JULIAN

CAMERAMEN:

HARRY HART, RICKY BRIGGS

SOUND: BASIL ROOTES, DON ALTON

RESEARCH: J. CHARROTT-LODWIDGE

FILM EDITOR: ANGELO ROSS

PRODUCER-DIRECTOR:

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND WRITER

MICHAEL SKLAR

### IN BRIEF

How does Britain look to Americans today? Are we a declining nation? Are we trading tradition for modern conveniences? Will Britain survive in an increasingly competitive world? Is Britain still midway through a second industrial and social revolution? Are our attitudes outworn and our children barred from better things by lack of education?

The study is of two contrasting communities, the Isle of Dogs in London, and the new town of Stevenage thirty miles away. What emerges is a picture of Britain trying to come to terms with a world far different from the one it knew before World War II. Some of the comments are critical of established traditions, of the educational system, and of the class structure. Others are affectionate, grateful statements about what has been accomplished in the past fifteen years.

### AN INTERTEL PRODUCTION

Available through  
Global Television Services Ltd.,  
3 Vere Street, London, W.1.  
Phone: MAYfair 1167  
Cables: Helpful, London

**TIME SLOT**  
**55 MINUTES**



## THE BACKGROUND

“Postscript to Empire: Great Britain in Transition” tells the story of two places, the Isle of Dogs region of London and the new town of Stevenage, thirty miles away.

The Isle of Dogs is not, strictly speaking, an island. It is formed by a large loop in the Thames as it flows past Tower Bridge. On this land, in the 17th century, King Charles II kept his famous spaniels; today the area is one of the most important shipping and dock districts of London. Britain relies heavily on trade; what happens on the Isle of Dogs is thus a good indication of what is happening to the rest of the British economy.

The programme interviews many inhabitants of the Isle of Dogs: Jim Griggs, who operates a crane and who inherited his job from his father; Borough Councilwoman Cressell, one of the first suffragettes and still, at 78, an active figure in politics; Thomas Hart the grocer, who comments both on the development of the area and his memories of World War II (as he reminisces about the war, the viewer sees film clips of the air raids, the bombing, the rescue work). Others are Reverend Strong, a Presbyterian minister who explains why there are only 200 church-goers in a community of several thousand people; George Cole, a young man in his late teens who comments on the problems of others of his age in this culturally under-privileged neighbourhood; and Mr. and Mrs. Woodward Fisher. Mr. Fisher started his career with a debt of £100, with which he bought a barge. Today he and his wife own one of the largest tug-and-barge concerns on the river. Actively interested in keeping up-to-date in his business, he is at the same time warmly devoted to traditions like that of the Doggett rowing race, which has been held annually on the Thames since 1716. Mr. Fisher is one of the oldest winners of this race, and is proud of the ceremonial coat and badge which he received as prizes. Still others who offer their opinions about post-war Britain are two labour leaders who explain the high frequency of strikes along the waterfront; the headmaster of a primary school who comments on the effects of the “eleven-plus” examination which determines for children what their secondary schooling, and perhaps careers, will be; and a number of teenagers who express their ambitions and needs. All those interviewed on the Isle of Dogs appear to reflect a willingness to stay where they are despite what might be considered a lack of opportunity or incentive to improve their conditions or outlook. But some decide to leave; the camera follows one family from London to the ultra-modern planned town of Stevenage.



## POSTSCRIPT TO EMPIRE



Left to right:

Borough Council member Mrs. Cressell and grocer Mr. Hart argue about the future of England.

The costume of a traditional Morris dance performed in Stevenage, one of the "new towns" built since the war.

The Isle of Dogs is an old part of London and the programme examines the lives of the young generation there.

Overleaf:

Mr. and Mrs. Woodward Fisher, who have lived all their lives on the Isle of Dogs, explain the need for change.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis French are the focus of the second part of the programme. Through their eyes the viewer sees the modernistic apartments and houses, the shops, the schools, the working conditions of a community that is only a few years old and that already houses several thousand families. The programme again interviews several people; Mrs. Ivory and her son, who once owned many hundreds of acres of farm land which has now been bought and used for factories; Mr. Alf Luhman, who came as a carpenter and has become a factory supervisor; Merton Tester, Conservative Party leader and town councillor, who represents the traditional outlook on class structure, education, and the government. It shows teenagers, restless after being uprooted from former standards of behaviour, a minister of the old Gothic church that still remains in the midst of modern surroundings; a factory worker whose children are getting a better education than he ever thought possible.

