**Anglia TV’s Nelson Documentary – Filmed at Paston in 1971**

The Nelson documentary was produced by Anglia TV in 1971, and the television production team arrived at Paston to film in “yer actual” Nelson’s old classroom (used by Fred Pointer as the music classroom back then).

A few of us second year pupils with the longest hair (it was fashionable then) were picked to play Nelson’s school chums. The role of Nelson was shortlisted to three fair-haired boys; myself, a lad whose name I can’t remember and Peter Blakley. We were lined up to be scrutinised by the producer (can’t recall his name) and the director Harry Aldous. Peter had a remarkable likeness to a young Nelson in a portrait of him as a midshipman in the book *Nelson* by Arthur Bryant. He could also keep a straight face during the line-up so he was the natural choice.

We changed into period costume, and as I recall mine was black velvet shorty jacket and pantaloons. For authentic 1770 shoes we were given elasticated silver-painted buckles to place over our 1970 Tuf Town school shoes. We did some filming in Nelson’s classroom, and I may be mistaken but I think Fred Pointer was press-ganged into playing the role of an eighteenth century master leaning over the boy Nelson, and pointing to his work on the table. I may be wrong and this could have been the producer playing this role, but I seem to remember that because it was Fred’s classroom he may have been in there anyway.

We were also filmed running around on the lawn in front of the old building to emulate an authentic eighteenth century Paston “play time” or lunch break. This was fun because normally we would have been bellowed at or summoned to Ken Marshall’s study for transgressing the law of trespass by walking, nay, running on that patch of hallowed turf. The excitement of filming was soon over, and back in normal classes it didn’t take too long before the dreams of stardom dissolved into the reality of the workaday world of getting shouted at by masters again. For Peter Blakley he continued to live the dream with a trip to Pompey with the production team for a film shoot on board HMS Victory. Apart from wangling a couple of days off school his reward for playing the starring role was a beautiful photo-album of professional stills plus £15, which back in the day was a very tidy sum.

I saw the documentary on TV later that year, and I think were visible for around eleven seconds. Photographs and a feature on the programme appeared in *The ITV Year Book 1971*, which must have come out the following Christmas. I’ll see if it crops up on eBay some time and buy a copy, as I’ve never seen it.

NB. I recently discovered that the Anglia TV director Harry Aldous cut his teeth as a member of the editorial team responsible for many a classic Ealing comedy including; *The Ladykillers, The Maggie, The Titfield Thunderbolt, The Lavender Hill Mob* and *Passport to Pimlico*. I wish I’d known at the time because I’ve always been fascinated by the post-war British film industry.