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Adapting Manchester: Granada Studios, *Brideshead Revisited* (1981) and the "Performance" of Place

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Abstract

This article comes out of initial research conducted into The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, on loan to the University of Manchester since 2022. Granada Television, established by Sidney Bernstein in 1954, developed a reputation for innovative and highly acclaimed drama during its lifetime, operating out of the UK first purpose-built regional television studios until 2009. Unseen before now, Granada's archive offers access to thousands of production and personnel files that provide unparalleled insight into the decisions and processes involved in all aspects of its' television production and planning, Television historians have frequently lamented the dearth of archive materials relating to commercial and regional programmes and the impact of this in shaping existing studies of the production, text, and reception histories of television in Britain.

The article will focus on archive materials relating to the studio's lavish and critically acclaimed adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), particularly those that relate to the often-hidden administrative, artistic and craft labour involved in finding and adapting locations in and around Manchester and the Northwest. The article will utilise documents in the archive which trace the production journeys of these settings. The use of settings in the North of England have often been understood in terms of how they underpin social realist notions of identity. However, this article will demonstrate instead how Granada's studio practices and cultures were able to utilise locations in the Northwest to 'perform' place, thus demonstrating the medium's capacity for a different kind of 'place-making' and underpinning the region's often neglected contribution to innovation and creativity in broadcasting.

Keywords: Adaptation; Locations; Manchester; Regional; Television.

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It's a basic imperative for producers to find locations which do not demand too much time or money spent on travelling. Those are expenses which show in the budget but do not show on the screen (Granada producer Michael Cox quoted in Cooke 2012: 104).

Granada Television, established by Sidney Bernstein in 1954 and once described as "the best television company in the world", developed a reputation for innovative and highly acclaimed outputs during its lifetime.[1] As one of the first franchise holders in the commercial ITV network in the United Kingdom (UK), it served the North (and subsequently the Northwest) of England and produced a range of popular and critically acclaimed programmes for local, national, and international consumption. It pioneered several groundbreaking programmes in drama, news and documentary, while launching the careers of many regionally based creatives such as Jack Rosenthal, Tony Warren and Sally Wainwright. But its significance lay not just in its programming. For its founder, Sidney Bernstein famously coined the term "Granadaland"; to summon up a sense of regional identity bought into being by the eventual broadcast reach of the television station. As Andy Spinoza explains "[the] folksy charm of this now half-remembered fairytale name for 5.500 sq. miles of TV signal reach became an intangible territory of the imagination, encouraging an identity-by-stealth in a region with little else to unify it" (2023: 12).

Bernstein, on the other hand, in a speech to the Manchester Publicity Association claimed that he chose the Northern Franchise precisely because, "The North is a [...] homogenous, cultured group with a record for music, theatre, literature and newspapers not found elsewhere", but also apparently because after consulting a rainfall map he realised that "if commercial TV is going to be a success anywhere in the world, it would be in the industrial North of England" (quoted in Moorehead 1984: 217). Granada's remit to serve the region was enshrined in the Television Act of 1954 which explicitly stated that part of the role of the Independent Television Authority (ITA), the network's regulatory body, was to ensure that

> programmes broadcast from any station or stations contain a suitable proportion of matter calculated to appeal specifically to the taste and outlook of persons served by the station or stations (quoted in Ofcom 2003:11).

Granada ran most of its operations from the first purpose-built television studios in the UK in Quay Street, Manchester, and whilst being one of the largest commercial companies in the network, it also offered a model of public service broadcasting that was different from the national broadcaster, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It declared itself to be consciously anti-establishment and inclusive, a sensibility that marked its drama output, most notably in broadcasting the first interracial kiss in the television adaptation of Barry Reckford's Royal Court play *You in Your Small Corner* in 1962.[2] This also extended to its current affairs coverage, using television to democratize the political process, being the first company to cover the Rochdale by-election, with two broadcasts involving the candidates talking through their manifesto commitments to a live, local audience in February 1958.[3]

This article comes out of initial research conducted in "The Corporate Archive of Granada Television", the broadcaster's paper archive which covers the company's programmes and corporate affairs across its history from the founding of the company in 1954.[4] The archive, which is part of the British Pop Archive, has been kept in a Yorkshire warehouse for the last 30 years. It is made up of between 750 and 1000 boxes and was put on deposit (loan) at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library (JRRIL) at the University of Manchester in 2022.[5] Unseen before now, the archive offers access to thousands of production and administrative files that

1. According to the "Granadaland" oral histories website, the "best television company in the world" description came from the BANFF Television Festival in 1976/77. https://www.granadaland.org/sandy-ross-talks-about-his-impressions-of-granada-tv-as-a-company/ (last accessed 19-06-25).

2. https://samiraahmed.blog/the-search-for-tvs-first-interracial-kiss-and-why-it-matters/#:~:text=Through%20the%20story%20of%20the,history%20of%20British%20TV%20drama (last accessed 15–08–2025).

3. https://granadatv.network/granada-goes-to-rochdale/ (last accessed 15-08-25).

4. The Corporate Archive of Granada Television has been placed on deposit at The University of Manchester Library. It is uncatalogued and does not, at the time of publication, have any formal finding aids.

5. https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/vast-granada-tv-archive-returning-24019217 (last accessed 27-08-25).

provide unparalleled insight into the decisions and processes involved in all aspects of Granada's television production and planning, crossing a range of genres and covering both landmark television serials and series, e.g. *Coronation Street* (1960–present), *World in Action* (1963–1998) and "everyday" programmes, sometimes targeted at specific local and regional audiences, where crucially now, no audio-visual record exists.

Television historians have frequently lamented the dearth of archive materials relating to commercial and regional programmes and programme makers in the UK (Turnock and Johnson 2005:4; Wheatley 2007; Moseley and Wheatley 2008: 154) and the impact of this in shaping existing studies of the production, text, and reception histories of television in Britain (Groom 2014). These have been predominantly organised around the wider availability of archive materials relating to the BBC, privileging London-centric accounts of broadcasting cultures and practices.

In developing this research, I approached the Granada Television archive not simply as a repository of historical documents, but as a mediated space shaped by institutional identities, preservation practices, and the contingencies of access. Following Simon Popple's (2015) work on the BBC archive, which highlights the ways in which archival holdings are structured by organisational histories and the cultural politics of broadcasting, my methodology attends both to what is present and to what is absent or obscured in the collection. This involved triangulating programme files, production notes, and correspondence with secondary sources to reconstruct contexts of development, production, and cultural value. By foregrounding the archive as an active, interpretive site rather than a neutral resource, the methodological approach seeks to ensure transparency about the evidentiary basis of the analysis while recognising the partial and situated nature of television history recovered through paper archives.

The article will focus then specifically on archive materials relating to the studio's landmark and critically acclaimed adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), particularly those that relate to the often-hidden artistic and craft labour involved in finding and adapting locations in and around Manchester and the Northwest. It will argue that whilst television and regionality in the UK has often been understood in terms of place-making, (Cooke 2012; Groom 2014), in the sense that location shooting is exponentially linked to representation, this article will think instead about "making places"; how studio infrastructure, encompassing materials, people and local knowledge was used to transform regional locations to fit the production's visual aesthetics and design briefs.

Discussion of "place" in television has grown exponentially since the advent of digital media, with scholars such as Christopher Ali reflecting on the role of place, community, identity and the question of "where is here" in the context of digital and globalised media (2017). Location studies, which has emerged as a distinct field within this area of scholarship, is particularly concerned with the politics of film and television locations. For instance, Hansen and Waade consider location studies as dealing with the "establishment and negotiation of locative implications in screen production" (2019: 105). This covers both places which have a direct relationship with the diegetic settings they represent and those that have a more negotiated relationship between the fictive place and real location. They also point to how production studies methodologies have impacted the study of places to move beyond how they are dealt with within the text to consider the "creative and financial practices which may influence a production" (2019: 107). Rappas builds on this approach to consider the "spatial capital" generated by Belfast's investment in its media industries both in terms of real and "reel" locations, using *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019) and *Titanic* (1997) as case studies. Whilst neither text was set in Belfast and only *Games of Thrones* actually made in Belfast, she claims that the "symbolic value attached to screen production and exhibition activity" reflects "a larger discourse that goes beyond the benefits of tourism or other financial or cultural benefits received from representation, adding 'creative' value to [Belfast's] image as a global media capital" (2019: 542).

However, whilst contemporary post-industrial Manchester, like Belfast, has also used its burgeoning media sector, particularly since the establishment of Salford's Media City in 2007, to add creative value to the city's image, when *Brideshead* was being made, the production eco-system was very different. Only Granada and the BBC had studio bases in the city, with the latter based in Oxford Road's New Broadcasting House from 1975. It is perhaps significant then that the history of the use of Manchester and Northwest locations in the filming of *Brideshead* still remains somewhat hidden. Whilst the tourist website *Visit Manchester* showcases a film and television location map covering a range of productions from the 1950s to the present day, it doesn't mention

Brideshead at all.[6] Thus the archive provides us with the opportunity to re-examine this hidden history of place-based practices and discourses in the production of culture.

The article will then take a production studies approach (Mayer 2011) to utilise documents in the archive that trace the production journeys of these settings from research, identification of suitability, and call-sheet information, which detail how they were sometimes used to provide multiple story locations in one setting. Materials in the archive can also shed light on how workers were organised and integrated by the specific production cultures engendered by the studios. Recent work by Sarah Street (2024) has investigated how the collaborative and material environments of studio spaces and technologies shaped film production cultures in the United Kingdom, but there has been little work that has applied these methodologies to the workings of television studios, where the relationship between infrastructure and regionality is necessarily more pronounced. Groom's work on Southern Television studios is perhaps the most extensive research to date in this area, and her emphasis on the agency of infrastructure has great application to Granada. She argues that "one of the reasons why the agency of infrastructures is ignored or glossed over in histories is because infrastructure itself is an umbrella term, encompassing all sorts of processes, networks, physical and political structures that are all ripe for analysis" (2016: 34).

I will also be referring to oral histories of Granada's workers collected by Judith Jones and Stephen Kelly for the "Granadaland" website[7]. This project was set up some years before the paper archive came to Manchester, to collect and record the memories of a range of personnel, from cameramen to designers and production secretaries who all worked for Granada at their Manchester, London, and Liverpool offices between 1956 and 1990. They offer a complementary, human-centred perspective on the institutional materials in the archive and a sense of how labour practices were developed within the opportunities and constraints that the studios provided. Overall, I will argue that looking at collaborative craft labour as revealed by the archive materials and the interviews circumvents privileging individual conceptions of the artist in the adaptation process and has implications for representations of Manchester and the Northwest of England. Locations in the North of England have often been understood in terms of how they underpin social realist notions of identity (Hill 1986). However, this article will demonstrate instead how Granada's studio practices and cultures were able to utilise locations in the Northwest to "perform" place, thus demonstrating the medium's capacity for a different kind of "place-making" and underpinning the region's often neglected contribution to innovation and creativity in British broadcasting.

The importance of drama as a genre to Granada's programming and identity was embedded in the company from the very beginning. A report in the *Manchester Guardian* about Granada's opening night programme on 3 May 1956, states

> From Sir Kenneth Clark, chairman of the ITA [Independent Television Authority] looking genial but a trifle out of his element, came the message of the evening about what independent television can really do for the North. Drama; that's the thing. The North has a great tradition of drama; a new school of North Country drama could be started (Anon., 1956).

Though, as Cooke (2012) describes, the company was initially slow to take up his challenge, by the 1960s, particularly after the establishment of *Coronation Street*, the company became known for a range of pioneering single plays and drama serials. It's clear that *Coronation Street*, as a long-running soap, helped to establish the studio infrastructure in terms of materials and personnel, which many different types of drama production, single plays, series, and drama-documentaries were able to take advantage of. However, as producer Michael Cox details, the literary adaptation didn't get started at Granada until after the BBC's success with John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* in 1967, which "bought the nation to a standstill on Sunday nights" (2003: 99). Granada's *Country Matters* (1972–73), based on an anthology of stories by HE Bates and AE Coppard, had involved the bringing together of some of *Brideshead*'s key players, such as producer Derek Granger and production designer Peter Phillips. *Country Matters* was also notable for being one of the first of Granada's television serials to be shot on film and on location, as was *Brideshead.* Cooke details how the main production

6. https://www.visitmanchester.com/things-to-see-and-do/tours-sightseeing/walking-tours/manchester-film-tv-map/ (last accessed 21-06-25).

7. https://www.granadaland.org/ (last accessed 20-06-25).

designer on *Country Matters*, Roy Stonehouse, made certain local locations stand in for the Southern settings of the book, therefore, setting up the knowledge and experience needed for the same process to be applied to *Brideshead* (2012: 100).

Country Matters was a relatively inexpensive television series whose remit sat well within Granada's local and network obligations in the 1970s. However, when *Brideshead* was in the pre-production stage from the late 70s onwards, major changes were afoot in the television industries, both in the UK and beyond, which potentially located *Brideshead*'s production economies beyond the local and the national. The 1980s heralded the setting up of a fourth terrestrial channel in the UK, Channel Four, a publisher-broadcaster model which explicitly increased competition and implicitly threatened the stability of the regional companies. Furthermore, a new era of satellite television, already established in the US and brought to the UK by the end of the decade, opened up opportunities for new income revenues and increased pressure to export.

At this point in its history, Granada had a particular investment in prestige drama, as it was originally planned to broadcast *Brideshead* in 1980, the year when the Conservative government was due to review the company's independent television franchise for another ten years. *Brideshead* was thus the first of Granada's ventures into American investment in co-production, to take advantage of changes in broadcasting regulations across the Atlantic. A programme with high production values, adapted from a novel by a respected, globally known author, could both demonstrate the company's commitment to public service broadcasting and attract audiences here and in the USA, not to mention increase the hitherto rather constrained budgets for Granada's drama output.

Files in the archive on Granada's involvement with the New York based PSB channel, WNET (Channel 13) and the oil company Exxon demonstrate that WNET's success in buying and broadcasting Granada's adaptation of Charles Dickens *Hard Times* in the USA in 1977 set the scene for their interest in *Brideshead* as part of a portfolio of completed and potential drama projects. Discussions between Granada's New York representative, Haidee Granger, Bob Kotlowitz from WNET, Exxon's John Irwin, and *Brideshead*'s producer, Derek Granger, are documented in the files. It is clear that where Exxon in particular were initially pushing for their investment to be no more than paying $40.000 per episode, Granada were pushing for *Brideshead t*o be considered as a "special case" and thus US investment was to be understood as a co-production agreement. Granger wrote of the negotiations that

> John (Irwin) wants to know why we feel Brideshead is worth more than the 'normal' buy. I pointed out at some length that we didn't feel this was a normal buy it was a co-production. We valued the creative input from Exxon and WNET and I didn't think he should consider Brideshead a 'buy'.[8]

What was also attractive to the Americans was that Granada had already completed prestige drama to sell. There was some hesitation about what to include in any sales deals, and a later letter discusses whether a suite of television adaptations of plays by Harold Pinter should also be part of the package. Granada, as a company, with their portfolio of high-quality dramas therefore was in a unique position to take advantage of potential American investment opportunities when it came to funding *Brideshead*'s production.[9]

As Cardwell details, a significant aspect then of both the commercial and cultural aspirations of the series was its visual style which can be explained "as an amalgamation of markers of 'quality' which confirm adaptations as examples of 'bourgeois television' ", claiming a certain cultural status not just through their extra textual links with "great literature [...] but also through their use of a 'cinematic' style" (2002: 80). Cardwell has argued that *Brideshead* did much to establish the generic signifiers of the classic novel adaptation in the 1980s, commenting that the combination of the *mise-en-scène* with a somewhat ponderous pace functioned as a guarantee of "quality", eliciting a viewing strategy commensurate with the labour of reading a novel (2002:112). Cardwell notes the unusually long running time of the series – 11 episodes in total, because of the producers' desire to adhere to the events and dialogue of Evelyn Waugh's original novel. However, documents in the Granada archive speak to a much more haphazard confluence of circumstances influencing the expansion of

8. Haidee Grainger to Barrie Heads, Derek Granger David Plowright, TS, Oct 28, 1978. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0046].

9. *Brideshead* also secured co-production funding from the German television station, Nord Deutscher Rundfunk.

the series from its original 5-hour serial format. However, there was no doubting from the evidence of the research materials in the archive that its conspicuous opulence in terms of lavish production design and range of locations, from Castle Howard serving as the *Brideshead* estate and Hertford College at the University of Oxford where the two protagonists, Charles Ryder (Jeremy Irons) and Sebastian Flyte (Anthony Andrews) first meet, was enshrined in the production values from the start.

Despite the emphasis on Castle Howard in the promotion of the series, what was less obvious is how both prestige and narrative expediency were acquired by transforming locations local to Granada Studios in Manchester. Unlike Oxford, these were places that were not necessarily linked to the indexical pro-filmic reality of the book's settings but made to perform through adaptation processes that involved the investment of labour generated by the proximity of Granada studios' production facilities and workers. This was a Granada protocol, as one of its staff producers, James Brabazon, recalls

> Most filming had to be done within thirty miles of base. And coming from the BBC, from which thirty miles gets you pretty well nowhere interesting, one of the remarkable things about Granada was the variety of locations within that range (2003: 94).

Therefore the combination of Manchester's unique post-industrial city landscape, a setting that even in the 1980s still retained many of the traces of the Victorian architecture of its heyday and the nearness of Granada studios as a production hub was used to generate the multi-location "quality television" aesthetic that *Brideshead* required—not just term of the labour of designers and set dressers to create specific visual environments necessary for the narrative to function, but also how these places were presented on screen in terms of camera angles, lighting and acting. As Banks has pointed out within academic studies, "the craft worker is abstract labour, unnamed and uncelebrated, but the fruit of their labour is nonetheless integral to textual meaning and audience pleasure" (2010: 307).

Having stressed the collective effort involved in these processes, however, it is clear from the archives that the producer of *Brideshead*, Derek Granger, was driving the project and had a very evident impact on the process of transferring the book to the screen. In an initial memo to the key creatives and production personnel, he stressed that, "as everyone knows BRIDESHEAD (sic) is very largely autobiographical and most of the characters in it are based, not wholly but often in part on the people who were Waugh's friends and contemporaries".[10] In the rest of the memo, he then matches each character with a real person who they were supposedly based on and gives out some suggestions for reading around Waugh and the world he lived in. Getting the details of this world was also clearly crucial to the production team. There is another memo from Granger to the team, dated three months later, where he describes how "We are at a very crucial research period in regard to small and telling details – namely the Oxford of 1922 and 1923 and particularly in regard to the world of fashionable undergraduates of educated taste".[11]

The rest of the memo then goes on to detail his concern that the books, paintings, and magazines that were used as props should all reflect the "lively intellectual interest" of the time. It is also evident that Granada's studio infrastructure, which encompassed staff working across drama, documentary, and daytime programmes, could be utilised when necessary to fulfil pre-production visual research briefs. For instance, a long letter from Granger to Barbara Barkham shows the former using established Granada networks to ask whether the latter would be interested in doing visual research for the programme:

> Denis Forman showed me yesterday the splendid album which the researchers compiled for Gus Macdonald's HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY programme. In fact, so good are they that one can feel the illustrative detail of the proposed programmes just by leafing through the research albums prepared. I think it would be very nice if you could do something similar for BRIDESHEAD,

10. Derek Granger (DG), TS 25 April 79. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0050].

11. From DG to Barbara Muxworthy, CC M Lindsay Hogg, Peter Phillips, Chris Truelove, Roger Fiske, Jean Vertigan, Margaret Coombes, TS 27 July 79. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

> particularly as we have such a variety of periods and places during the course of the stories unfolding.[12]

The letter continues to detail that what they want from the scrap book is "a quick form of reference to the rather elaborate visual details which we hope to establish on the screen" and then lists the sections that need to be created, from "Country House life in the Twenties to London in the Thirties, with particular reference to the general strike". There is also a section at the bottom of the letter which refers to needing a "brief pictorial search" for 'some of the other "typical" locations which occur and would certainly be a help to Peter Phillips (the production designer) and Roger Fiske (production buyer). These included "Studios in Paris, circa late Twenties, early Thirties and extremely distinguished Paris restaurants".[13] Both latter scenes eventually found their way to being filmed using Manchester locations but using set dressers and prop buyers to transform the locations where necessary, along the lines of the visual guidance provided by the researchers.

The archive provides testament to the sort of pictorial research that was undertaken in this phase, with many photocopies of books showing people, fashions, hairstyles, and interior designs from the requested periods. Another small clue from the archive also demonstrates how the wider cultural resources of Manchester, in terms of its iconic Central Library, were deployed to help in this endeavour. An undated handwritten note from researcher Ann de Stratford to Derek Granger about a book called *Enemies of Promise, Letters of Cyril Connelly to Nigel Blakeston* says that "this is the Central Library reference copy which they've loaned short term. If you want to keep the book for some time, can you let Lesley in the library know and she'll try to get another copy".[14] From the many overdue library notices distributed about the research files, it seems as if this wasn't an isolated practice.

Margaret (Maggie) Coombes worked as an assistant designer/ art director on the series under the supervision of production designer Peter Phillips. Coombes has provided invaluable oral history testimony for the "Granadaland" website in which she talks about her work on the series and in design teams more generally. Her account of how she came to work at Granada demonstrates how the studio infrastructure at that time allowed her to progress in her career, eventually replacing Chris Truelove as an assistant designer on *Brideshead* in the second production cycle, as Truelove had at that point progressed to production designer on another Granada production.

> I think when I started, there were 12 designers in the department and six assistants. They were all men except me, and again, some of the designers worked in drama, some of them worked in light entertainment, and some of them did factual stuff. [...] So if it was a drama, there was generally a designer and an assistant, and the designer had the big ideas and worked things out with the director and the producer, and as the assistant you would do all the technical drawings and liaise with the workshop because Granada at that stage had its own construction shop with carpenters and painters and construction managers, it was fantastic really.[15]

Coombes also talks about using the three prop houses in Manchester to "dress" any sets and then being on location, if needed, to liaise with the lighting cameraman about what was in shot on the day.[16]

There were two periods of research and location finding; one before and around the first filming began on 1 May 1979, in Malta and Gozo (which were standing in for Morocco, Mexico and Central America) and then another after the strike by ITV technicians which halted the production between 9 August and 24 October 1979. During this time, it was decided to expand on what had already been shot and incorporate more of Waugh's novel, and therefore, new locations had to be found. When the strike was over in October 1979, because of prior contractual obligations elsewhere, the original director, Michael Lindsay Hogg, was no longer

12. DG to Barbara Barkham CC Peter Phillips Bill Leather Craig McNeil Mo Templeman, TS 26 September 1978. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

13. Ibid.

14. Ann de Stratford to DG, GWA, MS, undated. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

15. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/maggie-coombes/ (last accessed 21-08-25).

16. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/maggie-coombes/ (last accessed 20-06-2025).

available, and so Granger selected Charles Sturridge to take the helm. Sturridge, a relatively young and inexperienced figure, had previously been through the 1972/73 Production Training Course at Granada, run by Derek Granger, again demonstrating how Granada's infrastructure facilitated a relatively smooth in-house transition to a new creative direction. As Granger described in his oral history interview, Sturridge was familiar with the Catholicism of the book and was passionate about putting the novel on the screen.[17]

A timeline of the extended production schedule in the WNET files details the wide variety of locations utilised in a six-week shoot in Manchester.

> June 1979: Filming continues in and around Manchester. A variety of miscellaneous sequences shot including several scenes from Sebastian's drunken escapade e.g. the car crash, the cells, Julia at Gunthers, the Police Court Scenes. Also, the Blackbirds party scene from the General Strike sequence.
>
> July 1979: Filming Manchester. Paris restaurant, Old Hundredth, New York bedroom.[18]

Materials in the archive from this initial phase show how Manchester was built into the production schedule to cover the locations in the novel outside of the set pieces and give the multi-location and prestige visual appeal required, without going too far away from Granada's production hub. Of note, also, is the labour of scheduling (usually completed by the production manager, Craig McNeil), which allowed one location over a couple of days to be used for multiple diegetic settings.

One of the earliest locations used for scenes at very different points in the narrative was Willert Street Police Station in Collyhurst. A Victorian building about 1,5 miles from Manchester city centre, the call sheet for Wednesday 24 May 1979, notes that filming on the day would cover Episode 2/scene 32, the police charge room, where Sebastian, Charles, and Boy Mulcaster are arraigned after a drunken Oxford escapade. This is followed on the same day by the exterior and interior of the "Blue Grotto Club", stated on the sheet as Episode 5/35 and 5/35, but in the final series, coming in Episode 8, when Anthony Blanche takes Charles to a gay club in London after the revelation of his affair with Julia. A location description shows how the visuals of this scene were taken directly from the descriptions of the place in Waugh's novel, "The place was painted cobalt; there was cobalt linoleum on the floor. Fishes of silver and gold paper had been posted haphazardly on ceiling and walls".[19]

The production team's local knowledge also allowed for impromptu location finding in Manchester to respond quickly to perceived gaps in the narrative. A memo from Derek Granger demonstrates both his knowledge of Manchester locations and familiarity with the script, in suggesting a local pub that could be used to show rather than tell the progress of Sebastian's alcoholism. The pub in question is the centrally located Tommy Ducks (since demolished in 1993).

> There is a real hole in the narrative when we run two *Brideshead* sequences together and miss out Sebastian's more ominous forms of drinking [...] Basically we really need an Oxford type pub for which Tommy Ducks (just behind Midland Hotel, Manchester) would be a very suitable substitute, requiring almost nothing done to it.[20]

Whilst most of the filming after the technician's strike took place at Castle Howard, there was a month's filming in March 1980 at Tatton Park, Cheshire, for the interiors of Marchmain House, and then a month in Venice in April 1980. By this time, Jeremy Irons had been cast in Karel Reisz's *French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), and thus shooting had to be arranged around his availability and the often-delayed production schedule of the film. In June 1980, a memo from the production manager Craig McNeil to Derek Granger gave a comprehensive list of the locations still to be found. It included the Paris artist's studio at the beginning of Episode 6, the New

17. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/derek-granger/ (last accessed 20-06-25).

18. TS, undated. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0046].

19. "BRIDESHEAD REVISITED-Descriptions of places from the text- with page references", TS, undated. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0050].

20. DG to MLH (director Michael Lindsay Hogg), McNeil C, Thompson P, Phillips T, Pritchard J, Robinson S Pritchard, TS, 14 June 1979. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

York sequence, and the General Strike sequence from Episode 7.[21] These were all later utilized by turning to Manchester and surrounding areas, with an art deco cinema in Didsbury passing for the Paris Studio and the Edwardian Baroque style Midland Hotel in the centre of Manchester serving as a New York hotel, although a pivotal scene between Charles and Celia in the New York lobby was filmed in Manchester's art deco Sunlight Building.

It wasn't just central Manchester that found its way into the serial, but also Heaton Hall in North Manchester's Prestwich which was used for several sequences including the party at Nancy Tallboys House and part of a later montage at the beginning of the new Episode 6 showing Julia in a range of locations (including St Ann's church interior in the centre of Manchester) charting her progress through society, with a voice over narration from Charles (Jeremy Irons). Therefore, the producers' adaptive strategy (bought in for the second stage of production and not in the original script by John Mortimer) of using Charles Ryder as a character to articulate what was often Waugh's original text in voice over, set against montages of different points in time then necessitated the strategic and economical use of multiple locations.

The North West's other metropolitan centre, Liverpool, was also utilised for the serial's later Transatlantic liner scenes, where Charles and Julia meet by accident and begin their affair whilst his wife Celia is ill in her cabin. Granger, looking back on *Brideshead* for the "Granadaland" oral histories project, describes how they

> [...] flew to New York and then we came back on the QE2 so that we could get our deck scenes. [...] The Atlantic liner sequence is very, very elaborate, as I say, filmed in eight different locations in Liverpool, London, and Manchester.[22]

Liverpool's Adelphi hotel was used for the interior ballroom scenes where the would-be lovers meet by accident, but a room in the Midland hotel was then used for Celia and Charles' cabin. However, a letter Granger sent out to the creative team also asks them to consider using Liverpool when exteriors that represented locations in London were needed.

> [...] there are some really excellent streets and squares in Liverpool which can stand in very well for London. [...] These locations can create a not dissimilar impression of areas like Eaton and Chester Squares in London [...] It's so difficult finding matching London exteriors in the Manchester area that it seemed worth passing on the good news.[23]

The creative team was also to find an ingenious solution to the problem of shooting Julia's visit to Antibes in France, a difficulty which arose when Julia was given more narrative space with an entire episode (6) devoted to her story in the lengthened version of the series. A memo from Derek Granger to Peter Phillips and his assistant Maggie Coombes suggests that Granger was matching up the visuals sourced from his research team with possible locations in the UK, writing, "what makes the French 'look' is really vegetation, sun blinds, shutters and sunshades. But I was heartened by the fact that the pictures are not unlike the recce photos of Portmeirion".[24] Eventually, Portmeirion, an Italianate-style village on the North Coast of Wales, most famously used as the location for the television series, *The Prisoner* (1967–68), was indeed used to shoot the scenes. However, it seems that for all the research undertaken, it was not always used by the design team. A memo later that year from Granger to the production team chides them for not making use of the extensive pictorial references for each scene and asks for communication between all the teams to be better. "For about every section of BRIDESHEAD elaborate literary and pictorial research is undertaken but sometimes this is wasted because in the fierce flurry of work, it is not somehow always seen".[25]

21. TS Craig McNeil to Derek Granger, 17 June 1980. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

22. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/derek-granger/ (last accessed 21-08-25).

23. DG/vl (Vanessa Lees), TS, 24 February 1981. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

24. DG to Peter Phillips/Maggie Coombes, TS, 18 June 1980. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

25. DG Wardrobe Research to Margaret Coombes, Peter Philips (sic) Roger Fisher Jane Robinson Joy Kleiner Peter Halston Lesley Bream, TS, 24 July 1980. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

Granger details how, throughout the extended production time, Granada (to a certain extent bankrolled by American investment), supported the series because they could see the value in the work that was being produced. Many of the interviews for the "Granadaland" project also identify Controller of Programmes (and eventual Chairman of Granada) David Plowright as being particularly supportive of the producer's autonomy.

> We were given this immense amount of freedom by Granada, which was extraordinary. And as I say, David was particularly understanding of our problems, so we had a wonderful, easy ride in that way, although it was very, very intensive, the making of it.[26]

It might be argued that without Granada studio's involvement, *Brideshead*'s unusually lengthy gestation, production and postproduction schedules just couldn't have been sustained, but that with the studio infrastructure in place, below the line labour during the second hiatus was able to be employed in other departments or in editing the series, whilst waiting for shooting to resume. This is borne out by the daily studio schedules, which were produced to show how the filming of *Brideshead* fitted into the overall Granada working day, and points to how the production was only one part of a bigger puzzle in terms of the daily operations of Granada studios. The sheets describe how the studios were allocated, as well as who was in makeup and wardrobe at specific times and where these resources were located. This also enabled the sharing of actors across productions. A detail in the overall Granada Studios daily schedule call sheet for Tuesday 29 May 1979, in the second week of Manchester filming, shows how one of the *Brideshead* actors, Phoebe Nicholls, who played Cordelia, was also filming in Granada at the same time on the single drama film, *Secret Orchards* (1979) demonstrating the ability to share human resources and capitalise on the studio's multi-production capacity.[27]

This article has demonstrated that analysis of how a place performs in terms of a television adaptation's spatial imaginary problematises the definition of "regional" television drama as linked to representation. It challenges the assumptions made between place, identity, and representation which are often applied to "northern" locations in the UK in the media (Russell 2004) and re-inscribes agency to local and regional production, reframing place instead as a "quality" marker of adaptive creative labour. Thinking about Manchester and the Northwest more broadly as a place of production rather than as a place for representation, therefore, brings into view how it functions as a place for disguise rather than display, set within a local, creative, and collaborative ecosystem that can facilitate these performance opportunities. This is underpinned by Manchester being one of the few places outside London to have a city-centre base, where labour space and studio culture combined to utilise local locations, providing the expansive universe of the "quality adaptation". Ultimately, an insight into this studio culture as well as the visual quality of *Brideshead* can be gained by referring to the account of one Jim Grant (now better known as Lee Child, creator of the Jack Reacher series) who joined Granada in 1977 as an assistant transmission controller. He talks specifically about the studio culture of the time as "a family", which he claims enhanced creativity as everyone was working towards a shared aim. Recalling an encounter in the Granada corridors with Mike Scott, director of programming, Grant asked him how *Brideshead* was going and received the reply that "Every frame's a Rembrandt".[28]

Manchester as a city has subsequently been used as a location for many film and television productions, both in terms of where the fictive place matches the location, e.g. Canal Street in *Queer as Folk* (1999–2000) and where Manchester "stands in" for other places, such as the streets of New York in *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Johnston 2011). With the construction of Media City in Salford, housing both the BBC and ITV along with independent production companies such as Nicola Shindler's Red Productions, the region's future as a media production hub, one that Granada was pivotal in establishing, is assured.[29]

26. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/derek-granger/ (last accessed 20-06-25).

27. TS with MS, "Manchester Week 2" Sue Pritchard (PA), 29 May 1979. [The Corporate Archive of Granada Television, The University of Manchester Library, Box 0051].

28. https://www.granadaland.org/interviewees/jim-grant/ (last accessed 20-06-25).

29. https://screenmanchester.com/all-the-greater-manchester-filming-locations-for-new-netflix-series-the-stranger-revealed/ (last accessed 21-08-25).

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